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THE SEARCH FOR INTIMACY BY A GROUP OF SINGLE YOUNG ADULTS
" IN AN EXPERIMENTAL T-GROUP

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Religion

by
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem

Establishing intimate relationships of mutual concern with other persons, especially of the opposite sex, is considered by many psychologists, and religious educators as the primary psychological developmental task of the single young adult. In observing and working with single young adults, it soon becomes very evident that one of their all consuming interests, is to find some kind of a mutually reciprocal love relationship. Unfortunately, for many single young adults their relationships with others end up in mutual using rather than mutual concern. Such relationships can end only in failure and dissolution. The single young adult after many such failures may choose to repudiate others and to become isolated from those persons or forces that pose a threat to his identity. The failure of the single young adult to establish meaningful intimacy relationships can lead to a deep sense of isolation and aloneness that can effectively cripple their growth towards mature adulthood.

Social scientists and religious educators are discovering within the context of small face-to-face groups

that individuals are not only finding out who they are, but they are also discovering the meaning of psychological intimacy. It has been my experience with several small face-to-face groups of single young adults that some of the persons come away from these groups with an increased ability to establish depth relationships of intimacy.

In this dissertation I propose to investigate one of these single young adult groups that was specifically set up to explore human relationships. A T-Group or what is commonly called a Training Group was used as the theoretical model for establishing this group.¹ By using a live T-Group of single young adults who knew they were called together to explore their interactions, I have attempted to extricate from this group by means of tapes, post-meeting reaction forms, agree-disagree questionnaire, and my own observation and reflections data to answer two basic questions: In a T-Group of single young adults what processes, individual modes of behavior, and individual means of communication block or facilitate psychological intimacy? Does a T-Group act as an effective tool for helping single young adults resolve their intimacy problems?

¹For an explanation of the meaning and nature of a T-Group, refer to pages four, five and six of this chapter.

My hypothesis is that a T-Group in human relationships does effectively help single young adults experience and learn how to promote that kind of psychological intimacy that they long for in their relationships with others.

B. Importance of This Study

Understanding and research into the central developmental problems that the single young adult faces in our culture has been almost totally ignored. A great deal has been written about childhood development, adolescent development, family problems, marriage, and the problems of mature adulthood, while very little has been written to illuminate the problems of single young adulthood. I believe the reason for this is the fact that our culture tends to look upon single young adulthood as a transition period between adolescence and marriage or adolescence and mature adulthood. Certainly, it is clear that the single young adult is marked with residues of adolescence and by foreshadowings of future maturity, but this should not lead us to look upon the single young adult as a post-adolescent or a pre-adult. Single young adulthood is a specific developmental stage that has its own unique problems. It is hoped that one result of this study will be to help establish single young adulthood as a more clearly defined developmental

stage that merits more research than has presently been given to it by psychologists, sociologists, educators, and ministers.

Another important aspect of this study is to shed more light on the possibilities for using T-Groups to help single young adults work through their intimacy problems. It is hoped this study will be helpful to those churches that have been so exclusively family-centered that they have ignored the plight of the single young adult. Often those single young adults present in our churches are representatives from the single young adult population that most desperately need to learn how to establish meaningful relationships. It is hoped that this study will encourage churchmen to use T-Groups in ministering to the needs of the single young adult.

At all stages of life individuals must have a chance to experience intimacy, if they are to become or be emotionally stable persons. All human beings have a basic need to love and to be loved. However, the single young adult is faced with very strong pressures to find a love partner of the opposite sex. Our culture tends to romanticize and idealize the married state, while belittling singleness. Thus, many single young adults feel pressured "to get married" even if they aren't really ready. Although the single young adult cherishes independence to

establish their own selfhood and their own style of life, they are constantly being pressured by nearly every institution they come in contact, including the church, to conform, to get along and to compromise. The single young adult that rebels against such pressures may choose a path that leads to isolation and anonymity. Thus, it is hoped this study will more clearly delineate those forces that block the single young adult from participating in intimate communication and those group processes that help them experience intimacy.

C. Definition of Terms

1. T-Group. The concept of the T-Group must rightly be associated with the National Training Laboratory in Group Development of the National Education Association.² The "T" stands for training and central to the Group experience is what is learned about human relationships. Bradford, Gibb, and Benne give this explanation of a T-Group:

A T-Group is a relatively unstructured group in which individuals participate as learners. The data for learning are not outside these individuals or remote from their immediate experience within the T-Group. The data are the transactions among members, their own behavior in the group, as they struggle to

²Leland P. Bradford and others, T-Group Theory and Laboratory Method (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964), p. 3.

create a productive and viable organization, a miniature society; and as they work to stimulate and support one another's learnings within that society.³

Every T-Group has a trainer who provides a viable example of the kind of behavior expected in this situation. The trainer attempts to model what it means to be a participant and an observer of the immediate interactions. Through this kind of group each individual may learn about his motives, feelings and strategies in dealing with other persons. He may also learn the kind of reactions he creates in others as he interacts with them. T-Groups are designed to help individuals be confronted with those modes of behavior in themselves that act as barriers to their being able to act fully and autonomously in their relationships with others.⁴ Obviously the T-Group has some similarity with group therapy, but the T-Group tends to utilize data about present behavior and its consequences in the here and now interactions of individual members. The T-Group is encouraged by the trainer not to delve into past experiences and causes of behavior. With the help of the trainer the T-Group attempts to primarily deal with conscious and preconscious behavior rather than to explore unconscious motivations. Also the T-Group is based on the assumption that the individuals

³Ibid., p. 1.

⁴Ibid., p. 2.

participating are relatively "normal."⁵

2. Intimacy. Since this word is the central focus of this study, I will greatly expand upon its meaning in Chapter Two. Intimacy is a word, that for many, refers to some kind of sexual experience. However, for the purposes of this study, I have in mind a broader concept which deals primarily with psychological intimacy. Erik Erikson is one writer that has provided us with a very important understanding of young adulthood. He has made it clear that the specific task of the young adult is intimacy, while at the same time reminding us that he means more than sexual intimacy. He writes, "it is obvious that sexual intimacies do not always wait for the ability to develop a true and mutual psychological intimacy with another person."⁶ In Chapter Two I will deal in greater detail with Erikson's understanding of intimacy and maturation from infancy to young adulthood.

Allan Moore gives this definition of intimacy that comes very close to defining the kind of experience most of the single young adults struggled for in the experimental T-Group. He says:

⁵Ibid.

⁶Erik H. Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle (New York: International Universities Press, 1959), p. 94.

Intimacy is real "meeting" which results in the affirmation of the other. It is the opposite from a monologue experience; it is participating in a dialogue which results in experiencing the other side.⁷

Thus, when I speak of intimacy in this study I am primarily referring to that experience between two persons in which there is mutual trust so that both can fully "be" what they are and at the same time in being who they are they are able to experience the other person as they are.

3. Single Young Adult. Although this study could apply to the total young adult population, I will be specifically referring to the young adults who are unmarried. In terms of chronological age group, I am generally referring to single persons falling in the age range somewhere between eighteen and thirty. However, for this study of an experimental T-Group of single young adults, I asked only those individuals who were still in the process of getting their formal education, who still had some connection with the parental home, who had maintained some economic independence by holding part-time jobs and who fell in the age range of eighteen to twenty-three. When I use the words, "single young adults," I am

⁷Allen J. Moore, Toward Understanding Older Youth/Young Adults (Report No. 2, Older Youth/Young Adult Project, Nashville, 1962), p. 23.

referring to a broad category that also includes those persons who are single, but have finished their formal education, hold a job, live away from the parental home, and fall in the age range somewhere between eighteen to thirty.

Thus, we might define single young adulthood as that period in life in which the central issue of living is a struggle between the desire to be an unattached independent person and the desire to establish relationships of intimacy with lasting ties of fidelity. Then the single young adult for the purposes of this study is seen as a single person whose primary struggle is between isolation and intimacy.

D. Procedure

1. Theoretical Procedure. In order to better understand intimacy in terms of human relationships and especially in terms of the single young adult, I will use Chapter Two to survey at greater length the clinical evidence, statements, and definitions that a psychiatrist, a theologian and an educator have made concerning the nature of intimacy and its relationship to the problems the single young adult faces.

In Chapter Three I will present some of the results from a training laboratory experience that was conducted

by the Older Youth-Young Adult Project of the Methodist Church in San Diego in 1964. Also in this same chapter I will present the results of one study that came up with some very significant data concerning the relationship between a T-Group experience and an individual's future capacity to establish intimate relationships after participating in a T-Group.⁸

2. Action Research Procedure. In Chapter Four I will present the data I gathered concerning the participants in the test group. Also the various phases of development experienced by the test group will be discussed as well as the kinds of interactions and processes that helped establish an atmosphere where the participants could safely examine their behavior.

In Chapter Five I will present the results from the agree-disagree questionnaire as well as the results from the final post-meeting reaction forms. I will present what I consider to be illustrations of intimate dialogue taken from the experimental T-Group in human relationships. I will use some taped dialogue from this T-Group to represent some of the learning and understandings

⁸William C. Schutz and Vernon L. Allen, "The Effects of a T-Group Laboratory on Interpersonal Behavior," The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, II:3 (July-August-September, 1966), 265-276.

that various members received as a result of their interaction in the immediacy of intimate communication. It is hoped all these results will illuminate some of those group processes and modes of behavior that encourage intimate communication in single young adults.

In the concluding chapter I will discuss in detail the limitations of this study as well as my general conclusions. I would also like to discuss in this chapter some of the implications the T-Group has for work with single young adults in the church as well as the implications that the T-Group might have for the small group movement in the church. Finally, I will present some suggestions and recommendations for further study and research.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF SOME DEFINITIONS OF INTIMACY

The writers that deal with the nature of intimacy and its special relationship to the emotional development of the single young adult are fairly limited. However, there are many more writers that have defined the nature of love and intimacy as it applies to the adult world in general. I will give several examples of various authorities that have attempted to define intimacy as it applies to single young adults as well as the adult world in general.

A. Erik Erikson's Definition of Intimacy in Light of His Life Stages

Erik Erikson, from his clinical work as a psychiatrist, has established some theoretical evidence that every individual from birth to mature adulthood experiences various developmental stages of psychosocial personality growth. Each stage is part of a total "ground plan" for the developing personality. All of the stages of growth have their special time of ascendancy until they are integrated into the functioning whole of the personality. Each of Erikson's life stages are fundamentally interrelated and all of them can be found in

rudimentary form during each life stage. Each stage appears at a specific time and sequence that is systematically related to all the other stages. As each stage comes to its ascendancy, a specific psychosocial "crisis" emerges that finds a lasting solution somewhere on a continuum between the negative and positive poles of the "crisis" that the individual is trying to resolve. The kind of solution that the developing personality finds at each "crisis stage" determines to some degree how successful the individual will be at the next stage of development. Each successive stage becomes a potential "crisis" for the ego, because of the radical change in perspective that is introduced by the psychosocial realities at a given time for a specific age grouping.¹ Thus, the "intimacy crisis" of young adulthood to be fully understood must be seen in light of the five developmental stages that have preceded the intimacy stage. Erikson says this about the interrelationship between the various stages:

The sequence of stages thus represents a successive development of the component parts of the psychosocial personality. Each part exists in some form before the time when it becomes "phase-specific," i.e., when "its" psychosocial crisis is precipitated both by the individual's readiness and by society's

¹Erik H. Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle (New York: International Press, 1959), p. 98.

pressure. But each component comes to ascendance and finds its more or less lasting solution at the conclusion of "its" stage. It is thus systematically related to all the others, and all depend on the proper development at the proper time of each; although individual make-up and the nature of society determine the rate of development of each of them, and thus the ratio of all of them.²

Because Erikson's understanding of the "intimacy crisis" of young adulthood is interrelated with the earlier life stages, I will present brief descriptions of these stages in order to enrich our understanding of Erikson's definition of intimacy.

1. Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust. In the first year of life the primary psychosocial trait that the infant must develop is a sense of basic trust. Erikson feels that this basic trust is the earliest positive psychosocial attitude that is developed provided there is maternal care and trust that has quality. However, if such is not the case, the infant may develop a lasting sense of mistrust.³

Erikson also believes that there is one virtue that is innate in every newborn baby and that is hope. Erikson makes it clear, however, that hope cannot ultimately be maintained without intimate relationships with persons in

²Ibid., p. 124.

³Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York: Norton, 1963), p. 247.

a favorable social setting. Hope, whether it be sought after as a single young adult or in infancy, is dependent upon an encounter with a trustworthy person. For the newborn infant, that first encounter is with the maternal person and if this encounter with the object world is such that the infant gets a sense that there is a caring, concerned being who responds to one's emotional and physical needs, a maturing hope will be developed that can maintain itself in a changing environment.⁴ When this crisis is not met in infancy, it remains a crisis even in adulthood as evidenced by the adult's never ending search for faith in himself and a search for faith in the universe.⁵

Perhaps it is this sense of basic trust that helps the single young adult establish relationships of mutual concern and intimacy. However, if this basic trust is not established in childhood, a sense of basic mistrust may be developed that remains a crisis for the individual until it is established in some other way.

The single young adult that lacks a sense of basic trust may seek this trusting relationship by merging or identifying with a leader or an adult who is willing and

⁴Erik Erikson, Insight and Responsibility (New York: Norton, 1964), p. 117.

⁵Erikson, Childhood and Society, pp. 220-221.

able to be a safe object for experimenting and relearning the nature of basic trust. If this happens, the single young adult might be able to take the first steps toward intimate mutuality.⁶

However, the single young adult may be tempted to take several possible negative roads in the search for maturity. He may cut as many ties as possible and then escape into isolation or he may identify with the world of alluring goods that tend to depersonalize life causing it to be lived on the surface.⁷ Perhaps these negative paths to maturity might be traced back to early childhood in which a sound sense of basic trust wasn't established. The possible consequence for the single young adult years, would be a strong tendency to mistrust relationships of mutual intimacy.

Erikson believes that this sense of mistrust is transmitted to an infant, if the mother is unable to communicate her own sense of personal trustworthiness. Trust does not depend on the quantities of food or demonstrations of love given to a child, but the quality of the trust and confidence that a mother has in herself and

⁶Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle, p. 124.

⁷Lewis J. Sherrill, The Struggle of the Soul (New York: Macmillan, 1951), pp. 112-115.

her ability to transmit this attitude to her infant.⁸

Erikson believes that parents must have some kind of faith that can periodically reinforce their own sense of basic trust. He feels that his job is not to decide whether certain religious practices of words and rituals are correct, but whether or not the religious forces in a parents' life are producing the kind of psychological forces that create the kind of faith that permeates the parents' personality so that they are more able to reinforce the child's basic trust in the world's trustworthiness.⁹ It is not difficult to see how a sense of trust, established early in life, would allow the child leeway in exploring his world and later establishing intimate relationships as well as a sense of identity.

2. Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt. During the second developmental period, which begins roughly in the second year of life, new achievements bring on a host of problems that converge into the second crisis which is manifest in the need for a sense of autonomy as expressed in independent behavior. When the child begins to walk, he begins to explore the house and his interest soon

⁸Erik Erikson, Young Man Luther (New York: Norton, 1962), p. 255.

⁹Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle, p. 64.

conflict with those of the parents. He makes known his ability to refuse or reject food or toys and this he can do with complete abandon. In these ways, he can make himself something of a problem to his parents. If the parents are overly restrictive and shaming, the infant may develop a sense of shame and doubt about his own being.

This stage corresponds to Freud's "anal stage." The infant in this stage learns "to hold on" and "to let go" as basic psychosocial modalities. Because of the contrasting forces of retention and elimination predominate in the child at this stage, other emotions and their contrasting pole come into play. Erikson describes this stage in this way:

This stage, therefore, becomes decisive for the ratio of love and hate, cooperation and willfulness, freedom of self-expression and its suppression. From a sense of self-control without loss of self-esteem comes a lasting sense of good will and pride; from a sense of loss of self-control and of foreign over-control comes a lasting propensity for doubt and shame.¹⁰

It is not difficult to see that if an infant develops a sense of shame and doubt during this stage that he might have such a high ratio of aggression and hate that he would lack the confidence to develop mature relationships of intimacy later in life.

¹⁰Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 254.

3. Initiative vs. Guilt. The third "crisis," which arises around the ages of three to five, is marked by a new assertiveness and aggressiveness in the company of siblings and playmates. His imagination at times seems unlimited and can be exasperating for parents. This same imagination enable him to test others with fibs and alibis.¹¹ The emergence of these new behavior patterns calls for new limitations restricting the child's movements and verbal exhibitions. Whether or not the child's initiative is impaired depends upon the extent to which he is helped by significant persons to build adequate controls into the structure of the self.¹² If the restrictions placed upon him are arbitrary and without consideration for his need to exercise his autonomy in ever wider spheres, the development of a healthy conscience is impaired.¹³ It is as though the child were saying, "I do not need to learn self-control for I am too much controlled by others." On the other hand, the child may over-control himself in order to defend himself against constant supervision. In either case, he is likely to

¹¹Arnold Gesell and Frances L. Ilg, Infant and Child in the Culture of Today (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1943), pp. 224, 227.

¹²Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 226.

¹³Ibid., p. 225.

harbor lasting resentments against the parents together with guilt feelings for resenting them.¹⁴

It is also at this stage that the child develops a close attachment with sexual overtones to the parent of the opposite sex. During this stage the child has strong feelings, sexual fantasies, and dreams that concern the parent of the opposite sex. In so many words, the child has its first love affair in which it must be defeated by the quality of the love relationship that exists between the parents. The guilt associated with this drama resolves themselves around six provided the parents have a good relationship and they in turn reassure the child by accepting these feelings of attachment as normal.¹⁵

However, there still may be an overly restrictive conscience developed in a child during this stage by parents that over-control. If this is the case, the child may carry an abnormal amount of guilt that will hamper the development of identity and intimacy later in life. Moore cites a study done by Symonds in which twenty-eight young adults were found to have a greater amount of depression, guilt, and wishful thinking than

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle, pp. 74-77.

during their adolescence. He concludes that anxiety and guilt tend to increase as young persons move into their twenties.¹⁶ Since guilt is one of the central factors during this stage, it may have some relationship to the increased guilt of the young adult years.

4. Industry vs. Inferiority. In this fourth stage which runs from about age six to puberty the child attempts to ward off feelings of inferiority by applying skills and claiming equality. The child begins to think of himself in terms of "I am what I learn." During this stage the child identifies with the parent of the same sex and learns to behave in ways corresponding to one's own sex. It is in relation to the neighborhood and school that the child must begin to "produce things" and gain the pleasure of "work completion." However, the child may have a sense of inferiority if the crisis of the previous stage has not been resolved. For instance, a boy may want his mother more than learning new things.¹⁷ Fortunately for children, the parent is no longer solely responsible for the development of the child. Now teachers

¹⁶Allen J. Moore, Toward Understanding Older Youth-Young Adults, Nashville, 1962. Report No. 2 in the Older Youth-Young Adult Project series, p. 10.

¹⁷Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle, p. 86.

and club leaders share the guidance load, and the quality of the interaction with these significant persons and the identification with them is important if the child, in this age of the joiner, the organizer, and the artisan, is to come through to adolescence with a lasting sense of industry.¹⁸ The importance of self-esteem and self-acceptance that comes through developing a sense of industry can hardly be overemphasized in terms of establishing an identity as well as being able to feel worthwhile enough as a person to seek out relationships of intimacy as a single young adult.

5. Identity vs. Identity Diffusion. With the emergence of puberty another pivotal and all important stage begins. This is the stage in which a new synthesis of all the experiences gained from childhood begins. Erikson describes this synthesis this way:

The integration now taking place in the form of the ego identity is more than the sum of the childhood identifications. It is the inner capital accrued from all those experiences of each successive stage, when successful identification led to a successful alignment of the individual's basic drives with his endowment and his opportunities.¹⁹

¹⁸Erik Erikson, "Growth and Crises of the 'Healthy Personality,'" in Symposium on the Healthy Personality, Milton J.E. Senn, editor (New York: Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation, 1950), p. 133.

¹⁹Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle, p. 89.

In a sense, the adolescent in his search for ego-identity must grow up all over again. Even though his sexual identity may be established, he now enters into a new relationship with the opposite sex which requires new social skills. His earlier battle with authority during pre-school years again becomes a problem. The adolescent begins to question all of the previous sameness and continuity relied on earlier through the parents and institutions of society. It is little wonder that such questioning takes place in adolescence, when one considers the changes that are taking place with such rapidity. The adolescent is faced with rapid body growth including new physical genital maturity, testing of new social roles, finding a vocation, and a reawakening of oedipal feelings towards the parent of the opposite sex.²⁰

Until the adolescent can integrate his earlier childhood identifications with a new concrete identity based upon what he is now, as an adolescent, he experiences role diffusion by over-identifying with celebrities, gangs, or cliques. Though this over-identification may result in a temporary loss of a concrete ego-identity, it is, nevertheless, an apparent attempt to enhance the self by enlarging the self to include other persons who stand

²⁰Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 228.

out from the crowd. Thus, the adolescent's worship of outstanding persons betrays a bid for individuality (difference) and a bid for intimacy (togetherness) both of which are also apparent in his clannishness and readiness to stereotype the out-group. Many of these groups become singularly clannish and intolerant of those that don't conform to a group's mores. Groups that become delinquent or cruelly intolerant are doing this as a defense against identity diffusion. Thus, adolescents help one another by forming groups that stereotype themselves, their ideals and their enemies. Their affectations and their rebellions are in a sense a reaffirmation of their autonomy and initiative, while their dependence on the crowd seems to contain elements of basic trust (sticking together, exchange of confidences, etc.) and industry is integrated by doing things together and organizing.²¹

The identity crisis of adolescence has a very strong bearing upon whether or not the single young adult is able to develop relationships of mutual intimacy. One need not look far to observe single young adults who have failed to meet the crisis of adolescence. The single young adult who continues to stereotype others, who

²¹Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle, p. 92.

explores shortcuts in becoming autonomous, who rebels against social institutions, who tries to capture intimacy through promiscuousness, or who claims stubbornness to be integrity, is still struggling against identity diffusion. Moore in speaking on behalf of the Older Youth/Young Adult Project of the Methodist Church states that it is their conviction that identity remains the crucial task for most single young adults.²²

6. Intimacy vs. Isolation. If adolescents are able to emerge from these years with a sense of ego identity, they then will have a degree of willingness to fuse their identity with those of others. Intimacy demands that one commit oneself to another in a psychological and sexual affiliation that requires the ethical strength to abide by a relationship in spite of the fact that the relationship will require significant sacrifice and compromises. However, since intimacy requires self-abandon, self-revelation, and self-exposure, it is understandable that the ego strength of the intimate one must be strong enough to risk a blow to the self in the event of broken promises or unreciprocated demonstrations of affection. If there is not a lasting sense of identity and ego strength, then it is unlikely that such an individual can

²²Moore, op. cit., p. 22.

afford to bare himself.²³ Dr. Ross Synder says that "achievement of identity is prior to the desire for intimacy. One must be secure enough that he will not destroy his identity before he can go very far in seeking the mutuality of intimacy. One must find himself in some way before he can lose himself in another."²⁴

The "engagement" of the single young adult in mutual intimacy with others is the result and a test of how well he has established a solid self-identity. When this is missing in the single young adult, intimacy contacts become a threat of "identity diffusion." When he seeks tentative forms of playful intimacy in friendship and competition, in sex play and love, in argument and gossip, he is apt to feel that such engagements might lead to an "interpersonal fusion" that would amount to a loss of identity. Therefore, he has a tense inner restraint that makes him very cautious in making any commitments. Erikson describes the effect identity diffusion has on the single young adult attempting to establish intimacy relationships as follows:

²³Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 229.

²⁴Roy Larson and Charles E. Mowry, Combined Report of Two Young Adult Consultations (Report No. 1 in the Older-Youth-Young Adult Project, Nashville, 1962), p. 13.

For where an assured sense of identity is missing even friendships and affairs become desperate attempts at delineating the fuzzy outlines of identity by mutual narcissistic mirroring; to fall in love then often means to fall into one's mirror image, hurting oneself and damaging the mirror. During lovemaking or in sexual fantasies, a loosening of sexual identity threatens: it even becomes unclear whether sexual excitement is experienced by the individual or by his partner, and this in either heterosexual or homosexual encounters. The ego thus loses its flexible capacity for abandoning itself to sexual and affectual sensations, in a fusion with another individual who is both partner to the sensation and guarantor of one's continuing identity: fusion with another becomes identity loss. A sudden collapse of all capacity for mutuality threatens, and a desperate wish ensues to start all over again, with a (quasi-deliberate) regression to a stage of basic bewilderment and rage such as only the very small child knows.²⁵

Although this is a good description of "identity diffusion" of the adolescent crisis, it is also a good description of what happens to the single young adult that fails in the intimacy struggle only to become isolated and self-absorbed.

The counterpart to intimacy is "distantiation." In order for the single young adult to really be intimate with a certain group of people and ideas, he must be able to repudiate another set whose essence is dangerous to the ones he has accepted. Weakness or excess in this repudiation is a basic reason for the single young adult's inability to gain intimacy. Such a person has an

²⁵Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle, p. 125.

incomplete identity and a person that doesn't know what he believes cannot repudiate discriminately.²⁶

Thus, we have seen how the intimacy crisis of single young adulthood is dealing with remnants of basic trust, of autonomy, initiative, industry, and identity. For the single young adult to become intimate then, whether with a sexual partner, a friend, an advisor or colleague is to reveal the self as it really is. It means mutual affirmation, reciprocal trust, and communication. It means sharing the deepest part of one's self with another. To withdraw from this necessity is to isolate the self in self-absorption and loneliness.

Thus, through Erikson's developmental tasks at various life stages, we have seen the importance of the five "crises of growth" that precede the "intimacy crisis" of single young adulthood. I have used the first five stages to illustrate the building blocks necessary for successful resolution of the "intimacy crisis" of single young adulthood. We have seen that for a single young adult to successfully deal with the developmental task of intimacy, he must be reinforced by meaningful experiences of basic trust, autonomy, initiative, industry and self-identity. However, if the single young adult has

²⁶Ibid.

primarily had experiences of mistrust, doubt, guilt, inferiority, and identity diffusion, he will have extreme difficulty establishing relationships of mutual intimacy.

B. Intimacy as Other Authorities Define It

1. Ross Snyder. Dr. Ross Snyder is professor of religious education at the Chicago Theological Seminary. He is well known for his studies on communicating with young adults. In defining intimacy Dr. Snyder uses the term "entering into" to describe the essential nature of true intimacy and communication. What he means by this term is defined in his own words as follows:

"Entering into" is a mobilization of the all of us to let what is in the other person speak to us. We are not just passive, or being only half alive. Rather we are fully ourselves, but focused in this particular functioning. We are poised to experience the special being of this other person, organized to understand the immediacy that is present, listening to his report. And particularly to the condition of his inner personal region which is within and back of what he says and does. "Entering into" means a participative knowledge rather than spectators knowledge of what is there; a knowledge from within the experience, not the knowledge achieved by one standing outside it as an alien. In entering into, we get alongside another in his situation, "walk in his moccasins," use his spectacles, feel our way into his fate--so that we are inwardly acquainted both with the situation within the other self and with the objective situation which that Self must handle.²⁷

²⁷Ross Snyder, "Entering Into," unpublished manuscript (Chicago: Chicago Theological Seminary), p. 1.

Thus, Dr. Snyder has defined intimate communication as the ability to move into the inward immediate experience of the other person without any desire to block it, change it, or collide against it with one's own thoughts and experiences. It seems to me that Snyder is saying to us that we must "co-live" the experience, but with the controls in the other person's hands.

Snyder also believes that it is essential for the "entering into" type of relationship to have a feeling tone between two people in which the person being understood feels that the other is also in connection with his "experiencing me." In such a relationship both become a "presence" to each other so that there is a personal force that reaches out from each to participate in the personal in the other.²⁸

Snyder feels that one of the most frequent causes of resentment in the single young adult is the experiencing of intimacy that turns out to be phony. Snyder speaks of the single young women, who meet the opposite sex in the expectation of being at least respected as a person, but discovers that she has been "used." She finds that the sexual experience that basically requires full intimacy and respect was in fact an experience of anxiety

²⁸Ibid., p. 2.

and hostility about one's masculinity or femininity. What really happened was a phony search for one's identity as a man or woman. Sexual intercourse under these circumstances is seen as an act of tension-release and not an act of freedom or commitment. Snyder feels that the real danger is that single young women may come to see social relationships as sales pitches, and thus conclude that the best thing for a single woman is to make herself a "marketing personality." Such a compromise causes young women to no longer value themselves on the basis of their own integrity, but on the basis of how well they are able to "sell" themselves to the impulse values of whomever they meet.²⁹

The stance of the "marketing personality" becomes especially pronounced in those single young adults who join the cult or sub-culture of the single young adult in the large cities. The stratas of this sub-culture are usually based on cultural sophistication and economic class. These single young adults have been taught by numerous college counselors, therapists, and novels that one becomes an adult only by cutting one's self off from parents, traditions, religion, civic life and moral

²⁹ Ross Snyder, "To Be Lonely: Its Experience and Structure for a Young Adult, The Wistful Generation: Reaching Young Adults Today (Nashville: Older Youth/Young Adult Project, 1962), p. 19.

upbringing. Often those single young adults that follow this path make up their own morality as they go along. Those young adults that have given up on real intimacy and have decided to communicate themselves on the basis of a sales pitch soon become the anxious victims of the race to be in the avant-garde, to possess the latest in fashion, and to have the right mind and behavior that conforms to the announcements by the image makers of what is really "swinging." Naturally those announcements supposedly have their source in that somebody who is really "in the know." However, Snyder feels that the single young adults who present themselves as the "marketing personality" may have many gregarious experiences and still be the loneliest of persons.³⁰

Snyder feels that every single young adult craves a real meeting of "a face" in which two individuals affirm each other's worlds by mutual recognition. Snyder feels such intimacy is built as a "co-personal world" in which respect and mutual understanding are the feeling tones communicated. Listen to Snyder as he describes the plight of the single young adult who awakens to his need for true intimacy:

³⁰Snyder, "To Be Lonely: Its Experience and Structure for a Young Adult," p. 19.

He is no longer satisfied with diffuse acquaintanceship--the kind of relationship which assumes interchangeable parts, depending upon whoever is geographically available. The depths of life now awakening within him and pressing for actualization give him the unconscious truth that to exist means to be part of a dyad; the unit of being human is always a twosome, the aritectonic of humanity is man-woman.³¹

In conclusion Snyder generally defines intimacy somewhat along the same lines as Martin Buber's I-Thou relationship. For Snyder this means "a sensitivity to the presence of another" which means accepting the other as a thinking, feeling, choosing person that seeks primarily to find meanings that are held only in trust. This sensitivity to the other means that the other has been invited into a relationship of dialogue rather than monologue. This invitation is called into being within the context of a mutual desire to form "worlds."³²

2. Martin Buber. Martin Buber speaks brilliantly to the meaning of intimate reciprocal communication. I have already mentioned briefly how Ross Snyder defines Buber's concept of "I-Thou." Buber defines the I-Thou concept this way:

The relation to the Thou is direct. No system of ideas, no foreknowledge, and no fancy intervene between I and Thou. The memory itself is transformed, as it plunges out of its isolation into the unity of

³¹Ibid., p. 14.

³²Ibid.

the whole. No aim, no lust, and no anticipation intervene between I and Thou. Desire itself is transformed as it plunges out of its dream into the appearance. Every means is an obstacle. Only when every means has collapsed does the meeting come about.³³

It is this I-Thou relation that allows two persons to realize each other to the fullest in the present moment. As Buber says, "true beings are lived in the present, the life of objects is in the past." Thus, the moment in which two persons experience each other as an I-Thou is soon followed by the I-It. Buber feels that every Thou is very transient in the world because it is soon fated to return to the world of things.³⁴

Buber feels that the I-It relationship is an experience that is planned and purposeful. The man who experiences the other person as an It does not go out of himself to do so, and the It responds passively. The It lets itself be experienced. The I-It relationship is a relationship of monologue where a subject relates to an object. The encounter of an I with an It is never undertaken with the totality of one's being. Although we are born as individuals, in that we are different from others, we are not born as persons. Our personalities are called

³³Martin Buber, I and Thou (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1953), pp. 11-12 (trans. Gregor Smith).

³⁴Ibid., p. 13.

into being as we come into relation with others or they with us. For this to happen persons must respond from the center of their own inwardness. In order for a relationship to be I-Thou it must be mutual. This mutuality is not simply unity, identity, or empathy but a kind of relatedness and togetherness where each remains himself and where the other becomes a Thou and not an It. Buber believes that the Thou is not just another I, because if we trust a person as another I we do not really see the person, but a projection of our own image. Certainly such relationships may have the warmest of personal feeling, but it is still an I-It relationship and can never know real intimacy.³⁵

In conclusion, these words by Martin Buber catch the flavor of what he means by human intimacy at its highest level.

Every real relationship in the world is consummated in the interchange of actual and potential being; every isolated Thou is bound to enter the chrysalis state of the It in order to take wings anew. But in pure relationship potential being is simply actual being as it draws breath, and in it the Thou remains present. By its nature the eternal Thou is eternally Thou; only our nature compels us to draw it into the world and the talk of It.³⁶

³⁵Maurice S. Friedman, Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), pp. 59-61.

³⁶Buber, I and Thou, p. 100.

It is hoped that these definitions of intimacy by Erikson, Snyder, and Buber will shed some light on the nature and meaning of the intimate communication which should be the goal of all relationships and is the central developmental task of the single young adult. It is through the action research presented in the next three chapters that I hope to show how a T-Group can be used with a group of single young adults in the very difficult task of learning and experiencing the power of intimate communication.

In Chapter Three the results from two action research projects with T-Groups will be presented to further illuminate the possibilities of experiencing and training for intimacy within the context of a T-Group.

CHAPTER III

THE EFFECTS OF TWO KINDS OF TRAINING GROUP EXPERIENCES ON INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

As far as I can tell, there has been very little research done specifically to discover the effects of a T-Group laboratory experience in helping single young adults resolve the "intimacy crisis."

However, the Older Youth/Young Adult Project of the Methodist Church has done some work using concepts and procedures that were derived from the group dynamics movement. I would like to give the observations and impressions that one team made concerning the nature and development of intimacy in a Wesley Fellowship.

Also, I would like to present one study I found that has attempted to measure the effects of a T-Group laboratory experience on the intimacy behavior and interpersonal behavior of seventy-one participating adults.

A. Report of Intimacy in an Older Youth/Young Adult Research Project

The Older Youth/Young Adult Project of the General Board of Education of the Methodist Church set up a six day training laboratory for the Wesley Fellowship of the First Methodist Church of San Diego in April, 1964. The

purpose of this workshop was to explore the factors which help or hinder single young adults in church groups in ministering to other persons in the world. Although this research project was not specifically set up to test the development of intimacy within the context of the Wesley Fellowship, the team did report some of their impressions and observations concerning the nature and development of intimacy within this church group of single young adults. The team tried to make observations in the three areas of development as defined by Erik Erikson that most directly affect the psychosocial growth of the single young adult-- identity vs. identity diffusion; intimacy vs. isolation; generativity vs. self-absorption. From the insights gathered from this project the team decided rather arbitrarily that under each of these three life stages they could set up six "learning tasks" that overlap, but nevertheless helped this research team define and structure the learning of identity, intimacy, and generativity. These six "learning tasks" that the project tried to build into the workshop and make observations about were as follows:

1. Learning intimacy through belonging.
2. Learning intimacy through imaging the meaning of relationship.
3. Learning intimacy through conceptualizing.
4. Learning intimacy through becoming capable of relationship.

5. Learning intimacy through training.
6. Learning intimacy through testing it in the world.¹

The fifth "learning task" most directly relates to the central concern of this dissertation. Unfortunately, the research team made no special effort in the area of training for intimacy. However, they did make some observations as to the nature of the intimacy existing within the group and they did observe that some of the group experienced intimacy through belonging, imaging, and conceptualizing.

1. Intimacy Through Belonging. The team agreed that a sense of belonging is necessary for the single adult to be able to develop the capacity for intimate interpersonal relationships needed to minister to persons in the world. They concluded that this sense of belongingness had already been developed to some degree in this church group as the result of their experience together as a Christian group. On a pre-project information sheet many in this group spoke warmly of the sense of belonging they felt in Wesley. One comment on the pre-project

¹George Koehler, "Factors That Help and Hinder Older Youth/Young Adults in Church Groups in Ministering to Other Persons in the World" (The report of a six-day research project of the Older Youth/Young Adult Project of the General Board of Education of the Methodist Church, 1964), pp. 16-19.

information sheet said, "The fellowship makes you feel welcome and wanted."²

Four questions were asked on an agree-disagree form that gave very strong evidence that the twenty-one single young adults that answered the questions felt a very strong sense of belonging in the Wesley Fellowship. The results of these four questions are:

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
In this group, people of all kinds are accepted pretty well, but still most of our personal relationships are not very deep.	13	8
I still feel kind of defensive in Wesley.	2	19
Of all the groups I belong to, Wesley is the one where I feel most related to other people.	19	1
This relationship at Wesley has actually helped me to have more meaningful relationships out in the "world."	20	0

Although the results from the first question indicates that more than half the group did not feel personal relationships were very deep, it is significant that eight persons disagreed. The research team felt that although the first question contains two variables, that

²Ibid., p. 36.

other evidence they had observed indicated that the eight who disagree with the question are referring to the second half of the question.³ It seems to me rather striking that that many in a group of single young adults feel relationships are "very deep." But it is even more striking that on the next three questions the group is nearly unanimous in their feeling that the group does provide "intimacy through belonging."

Here is another piece of evidence that supports the idea that this particular group had a strong sense of belonging. At the end of the six sessions the team did a sociogram on the group. They asked each member to do this: "Of the various people at Wesley this week, please name three to whom you feel closest." Here are some observations made by the team as a result of this sociogram. They said:

- a. Seventeen of the twenty-five are involved in mutual choices. They "feel closest" to each other; and chances are, they know they are in relationship. Their "co-personal world" is established, conscious, a going concern.
- b. These mutual choices occur in a remarkable string which binds the group together. There is no hint of cliques or major cleavages.
- c. There are three unchosen isolates, and five others chosen once or twice but not mutually, one of these giving no choice. In addition,

³Ibid., p. 37.

four absent members were chosen once. Most of these twelve participated when present but somewhat less than the average mutual choice member. There were no signs of open rejection noticed by the team.

Team Conclusion

In general, the test group appears to be one of considerable unity and mutual relationship, a group where isolates are accepted and which helps even those who feel the relationships are not deep to drop their defenses, live together with others, and grow in their capacity for relationship in the world. It is the judgment of the research team that such belonging is an excellent aid in pushing back isolation and growing in one's capacity for intimacy. Thus it is in such a group that the preparation for ministries involving intimacy might best be done.⁴

2. Imaging Intimacy. The research team found that imaging intimacy was an interrelated process with imaging identity. The team's greatest single impression was that many of the participants were uncertain about self-identity and this hindered them imaging intimacy. When the group was asked to finger paint what it felt like to minister that day, the majority came up with identity pictures rather than pictures of ministry to others.⁵

The group had a great deal of difficulty seeing Christian living in terms of interpersonal acceptance and care. However, the research team did find that by

⁴Ibid., p. 39.

⁵Ibid., p. 22.

the last two sessions of the workshop the group began to emphasize extending the self through care and concern for other persons. This was aided by the failure of moralism to provide the answer by the use of the film-strip "Members One of Another" which has powerful images of intimacy, by the use of the film "Assembly Line" which does an excellent job of imaging estrangement and loneliness for a single young adult living in the city, and by the use of role playing specific intimacy needs. All of these techniques helped created images of interpersonal concern and intimacy.⁶

3. Conceptualizing Intimacy. The team did not make any special effort to help the group in any disciplined way conceptualize the meaning of love and intimacy. However, the team recommended that conceptual aids in respect to the meaning of "love" should be designed to help the single young adult develop the capacity for Christian intimacy.⁷

4. Becoming Capable of Intimacy. It was the research team's impression that the participants were very limited in their capacity to act as Christian ministers in the world because they were not yet able to participate.

⁶Ibid., p. 40.

⁷Ibid., p. 41.

in real personal intimacy. The team made eight attempts in the last two sessions to get the participants in a role playing situation to establish the beginning of a caring relationship in a face-to-face conversation with another young adult. On the eighth try after the instructor had specifically suggested in three previous tries that the roleplayers approach the other person with a real desire to understand him as a person, a breakthrough occurred in which the person taking the caring role was able to live the relationship by understanding the other person's point of view. The team felt the role playing indicated that the actual capacity for intimacy was missing. Instead the participants repeatedly used confession as a strategy of interaction which the team felt was an indication that the participants were still struggling with self-identity. The team concluded that the participants were ineffect saying, "We're in this identity struggle together. I can't hold you up, and I know you can't hold me up. But at least we can lean on each other."⁸

5. Training for and Testing Intimacy. The research team did not do any specific work in this area.

⁸Ibid., p. 42.

However, in their study of the identity struggle, they did make some recommendations for training and testing identity that also apply to the "intimacy crisis."⁹ One hunch they had, which is the focus of this dissertation, was that the single young adult might effectively receive training for identity and intimacy growth in an intensive T-Group. They also felt the identity and intimacy must be tested with what they called "existential methods" both in and outside the group.¹⁰

The T-Group of single young adults I used for training for intimacy did have an immediate chance to test their learning with members of the group because they saw each other in other settings. Unfortunately, I did not develop any effective means of testing the after-effects of this experience upon the various individual's interpersonal relationships.

In conclusion it appears that this research project in San Diego had only slight effect in promoting individual and group intimacy. However, the group had already developed a strong sense of belonging for nearly all the members. I believe this group had one of the first and most important ingredients for individual members to experience deep relationships and to receive help

⁹Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 35.

in the struggle with the "intimacy crisis," a sense of belonging.

B. Research Measuring the Effects of a T-Group Laboratory on Interpersonal Behavior

In a study done on seventy-one participants in a 1959 Western Training Laboratory in Human Relations, Dr. William C. Schutz and Dr. Vernon L. Allen used both a FIRO-B questionnaire (Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior) and an open-ended questionnaire to measure the effects of a two week T-Group laboratory experience upon the interpersonal behavior of the participants. The FIRO-B was administered before, after, and six months later on the participants in the T-Group laboratory. The control group consisted of thirty students from an education class at the University of California, Berkeley. They were also given the FIRO-B three times. However, the final administration of the test was given three months after the second administration rather than six months as was done with the test group. The open-ended questionnaire was given only to the test group six months after the T-Group experience.¹¹

¹¹William C. Schutz and Vernon L. Allen, "The Effects of a T-Group Laboratory on Interpersonal Behavior," The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, II:3 (July-August-September, 1966), 265.

The changes in responses to the FIRO-B by the T-Group participants were compared with the changes within the control group. The members of the control group had no specific intervening experience which might change their basic orientation toward interpersonal relations, while the T-Group participants had an experience designed to bring about changes in interpersonal behavior. The reason for administering the test three times was to have a means of evaluating the effect the passage of time had upon interpersonal behaviorial changes begun in the T-Group laboratory experience.¹²

The reason this study is important for this dissertation is that one-third of the questions on the FIRO-B deal specifically with intimacy behavior.¹³ If there is any significant change in the responses to the intimacy questions that do not occur in the control group, such results will be corroborative evidence to support my hypothesis that single young adults can be helped through a T-Group experience to resolve some of their intimacy problems. Unfortunately, the seventy-one participants in the T-Group laboratory were not just single young adults.

¹²Ibid., p. 267.

¹³William C. Schutz, FIRO, a Three Dimensional Theory of Interpersonal Behavior (New York: Rinehart, 1958), pp. 64-65.

Although the age range is given as twenty to sixty-three, there is no breakdown as to how many fall into each age nor is the marital status of each participant given. I do not want to imply that the intimacy struggle is limited to the single young adult, although this question is usually more central to them than at any other period of life. However, if the results show that a group of adults find improvement in their intimacy relationships as a result of a T-Group laboratory experience, a similar experience might be valid for a group of single young adults.

Instead of using the word "intimacy" in the FIRO-B questionnaire, Dr. Schutz uses the word "affection" to describe one of his three basic theoretical needs that he feels all people have in terms of their interpersonal relationships. The other two needs he calls inclusion and control. But for the purposes of this study, Schutz's definition of affection adds something to our understanding of intimacy. He defines affection at three levels--at the behavioral level, at the feeling level, and at the level of self-concept.¹⁴ He defines the meaning of the three levels of affection as follows:

¹⁴Ibid., p. 20.

The interpersonal need for affection is defined behaviorally as the need to establish and maintain a satisfactory relation with others with respect to love and affection.

At the feeling level the need for affection is defined as the need to establish and maintain a feeling of mutual affection with others. This feeling includes (1) being able to love other people to a satisfactory degree and (2) having others love the self to a satisfactory degree.

The need for affection, defined at the level of the self-concept, is the need to feel that the self is lovable.¹⁵

The need for affection causes behavior in which persons become emotionally close. But in order for persons to establish this emotional attachment there must be a willingness to confide the deepest and innermost anxieties, wishes, and feelings. The stronger the affectional ties the more usual it is for the two persons involved to share these feelings. However, if a person desires to avoid affectional ties, especially in a group, a common method to avoid these ties is by trying to be equally friendly with all members. Schutz says, "affection means to some degree that which can be found in situations of love, emotional closeness, personal confidences or intimacy. Negative affection is characterized by hate, hostility, and emotional rejection."¹⁶

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 23-24.

1. Affection Types. Dr. Schutz describes three kinds of affection types--the underpersonal, the overpersonal, and the personal. The underpersonal type is the person who avoids close personal ties with others. Such a person is most comfortable when one-to-one relationships are kept superficial and distant. Actually the conscious wish and the unconscious desire are opposed. Although such a person may express a desire to not get "emotionally involved" he unconsciously wants and seeks an intimate relationship. His fear is that no one loves him and in groups he is especially afraid he won't be liked. Consequently, he has difficulty in liking people because he distrusts their feelings toward him. His attitude might be stated thus, "I find intimacy in personal relationships painful, since I have been rejected; therefore, I shall avoid any close relations in the future." The direct way to keep emotionally distant is to reject others to the point of antagonism, while the more subtle way would be to appear superficially nice to everyone. Words like "close" and "personal" refer to emotional closeness and might mean sharing of private feelings and concerns as well as tender feelings, which are very threatening to the underpersonal individual. Thus, by keeping everyone at the same distance, he nullifies ever showing any one person more warmth and

affection. Actually, in such persons there is a deep fear that they are not lovable, because if people really knew him, they would discover the traits that make him unlovable. His intimacy anxiety is that no one could love him, because at the core he really is nasty and bad.¹⁷

The overpersonal type is the other extreme of the underpersonal and is characterized by being overly intimate and personal to compensate for his anxiety about being always rejected and unlovable. As in the underpersonal there are two approaches--direct and subtle. The direct method is to overtly attempt to earn affection by being very nice, approving, intimate, and confiding, while the subtle way is to be possessive of a friendship and to indirectly punish any attempts of the friend to have other friendships.¹⁸

Schutz describes the personal type as one who has found a balance between the underpersonal and the overpersonal. He says:

For the individual who successfully resolved his affectional relations with others in childhood, close emotional relations with one other person present no problem. He is comfortable in such a personal relation, and he can also relate comfortably in a situation requiring emotional distance. It is important for him to be liked, but if he isn't liked he

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 30-31.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 31.

can accept the fact that the dislike is the result of the relation between himself and one other person --in other words, the dislike does not mean that he is an unlovable person. Unconsciously, he feels that he is a lovable person who is lovable even to people who know him well. He is capable of giving genuine affection.¹⁹

2. The FIRO-B Questions on Affection. The FIRO-B questionnaire attempts to ask questions in the area of affection that do two things. The first set of questions on affection attempt to illicit responses that will measure the degree to which the respondent expresses behavior of affection to others. The second set of questions on affection attempt to get responses that will indicate the degree to which the respondent wants affection from others. Both sets of questions tend to measure whether a person is overpersonal, underpersonal, or personal. Here are some sample questions from each set:

Questions of Expressed Affection

1. I try to have close relationships with people.
usually often sometimes occasionally rarely
never
2. My personal relations with people are cool and
distant
most people many people some people a few people
one or two people nobody

¹⁹Ibid.

Questions of Wanted Affection

1. I like people to act close toward me.
usually often sometimes occasionally rarely
never
2. I like people to act cool and distant toward me
most people many people some people
a few people one or two people nobody

There are nine similar questions given in each of the areas of affection.²¹

3. The Results of the FIRO-B on the Test Group.

Schutz and Allen made the hypothesis that the Western Training Laboratory group experience would change people selectively depending on their initial personality. This would mean that those that were overly intimate would become more discriminate and those who were "underpersonal," cold, and reserved would become more intimate. If this group achieved this ideal, the correlations between the T-Group before and after FIRO-B scores and between the after and final FIRO-B scores should be significantly lower than the corresponding correlations for the control group subjects.²¹

The results were that the experimental group had significantly lower correlations than the control group.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 64-65.

²¹ Schutz, "The Effects of a T-Group Laboratory on Interpersonal Behavior," p. 268.

This was especially significant between the after and final administrations of FIRO-B. The data also indicated that there was some important shifting of responses during the two week T-Group laboratory experience, but the greater change in responses still occurred within the six months after the group experience.²²

The correlations on the FIRO-B Scale Scores in the area of affection were as follows:

	<u>Expressed Affection</u>	<u>Wanted Affection</u>
Before and After		
Experimental . . . . .	.56	.68
Control . . . . .	.70	.84
After and Final		
Experimental . . . . .	.64**	.66**
Control . . . . .	.92	.87
Before and Final		
Experimental . . . . .	.61	.41**
Control . . . . .	.76	.79

**Difference is significant at .01 level between experimental and control group correlations.²³

Thus, the FIRO-B results indicate a significant change in affection behavior. The correlations among before, after and final administrations of FIRO-B reveal a much greater change (lower correlation) in the T-Group

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., p. 269.

participants on all the affection scales as compared with the control group. Consequently, it appears from this research that we have some evidence that a concentrated T-Group laboratory experience does produce significant behavior changes in the affection (intimacy) area. The overly affectionate ("overpersonal") become less affectionate, while the "underpersonal" become more affectionate.

4. Results of the Open-ended Questionnaire. Six months after the T-Group experience Schutz and Allen also sent along with the FIRO-B questionnaire another questionnaire that asked questions concerning any changes positive or negative that the respondents felt were due to the T-Group laboratory experience. The questions asked were as follows:

1. Describe any differences in your interpersonal behavior that you feel are due, at least in part, to WTL, including (a) specific examples, (b) job changes such as promotions or demotions, or (c) any other evidences that will help specify changes.

2. Did any of these effects occur promptly and wear off, or not occur until after a lapse of time? If so, which?

3. Did any changes occur in your feelings toward other people? What?

4. Do you find it easier or more difficult to accept yourself and the way you are?

5. Have you detected any change in the reaction of other people toward you, both in terms of behavior and feelings? Please describe.

6. If possible, would you specify which particular part of WTL was most influential?²⁴

The response to these questions were carefully analyzed by the method of content analysis based on dichotomous decisions.²⁵ It is not necessary for the purposes of this study to go into this process. Questions one, three, and five received many replies that might be interpreted to mean change in terms of intimacy behavior. Each one of these questions were broken down into seven general categories that represented the major ways various individuals responded to the question. I would like to present all of the results of questions one, three, and five, because I believe they are an amazing testimony as to the validity of a T-Group laboratory experience for changing interpersonal behavior. I have underlined those categories or portions of a category that I feel deal specifically with intimacy behavior. The results are as follows:

²⁴Ibid., p. 270.

²⁵W. C. Schutz, "On Categorizing Qualitative Data in Content Analysis," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXII:4 (Winter 1958-1959), 503-515.

I. Behavior of Respondent toward Other People
(100 Responses)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Per cent of Responses</u>	<u>Example</u>
1. <u>Applied results of the experience to solving human relations problems of others and to improve job performance</u>	31	"Have used group consultation to plan action in certain difficult personal situations of employees. Results have been most gratifying."
2. <u>Friendlier, easier to get along with, or simply improved behavior with people.</u>	23	"I believe I have been <u>friendlier toward other people</u> ," and "A <u>much closer and relaxed relationship</u> with my wife."
3. <u>More aggressive, outgoing, extroverted behavior and more honesty, confidence, and willingness to reveal myself.</u>	18	" <u>Better able to express anger and hostility toward my boss, co-workers, and friends without feeling so frightened and guilty about it</u> ," and "I brag a little more, apologize less, and make my wishes known more often."
4. <u>Improved ability to listen and better communication in general.</u>	11	" <u>It seems to me there is a noticeable improvement in my ability to listen objectively--a lesser need to defend my point of view.</u> "
5. <u>Favorable change in feelings and attitudes when with people or feelings about or toward other people.</u>	09	" <u>I can make friends a lot more rapidly--but it is OK to keep my distance if I feel like it.</u> "
6. <u>No change in behavior toward other people.</u>	04	"No change."
7. <u>A change for the worse.</u>	04	"I was worse off relating to people for some time."

II. Respondents' Feelings toward Other People (104 Responses)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Per cent of Responses</u>	<u>Example</u>
1. Increased intellectual understanding, awareness, and insight about other people or interpersonal problems.	35	"A definite increase in awareness of the effects of interpersonal relationships on individual and group performance."
2. More appreciation, sympathy, and tolerance for other people.	20	" <u>I appreciate people and their emotional problems considerably more since learning that almost everyone has them.</u> "
3. More relaxed, at ease, less tension, and more enjoyable and improved relations with people.	15	" <u>Less tension, better relationship between staff and myself.</u> "
4. Increased acceptance of others.	11	" <u>Better acceptance of others, particularly persons in authority.</u> "
5. Feeling more sensitive, interested, honest and realistic with people.	07	" <u>I feel warmth toward everyone,</u> " and " <u>The drive to always include others or to be included is not so strong. I don't feel I have to like everyone, and it's perfectly natural and all right if people dislike me.</u> "
6. No change in feeling.	15	"No change."

III. Behavior of Other People toward Respondent (69 Responses)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Per cent of Responses</u>	<u>Example</u>
1. No change	28	"No change."
2. People have become more friendly, sympathetic, and responsive to me.	22	" <u>I can sense a quick and warm response from other,</u> " and " <u>The change in others close to me is almost unbelievable.</u> "
3. A positive change in reactions.	19	" <u>I feel that other people react more favorably to me.</u> "
4. People trust me and have more confidence in and respect for me.	12	" <u>Others seem to trust me and hold me in esteem,</u> " and " <u>I detect that my older subordinates respect me more as a person.</u> "
5. People feel freer to express their feelings and find it easier to communicate ideas to me.	10	" <u>People seem more willing to be frank with me,</u> " and " <u>They say that communication is so much better.</u> "
6. I make people feel better than I used to, e.g., they feel freer, more relaxed, willing to confide.	07	" <u>Others say they now feel more at ease with and 'close' to me.</u> "
7. A change for the worse.		"My marriage was adversely affected, I returned wanting the kind of emotional communication I received at WTL. My husband is unable to give this--or at least no pattern of it has built up." ²⁶

²⁶Schutz, "The Effects of a T-Group Laboratory Interpersonal Behavior," pp. 273-276.

"My marriage was adversely affected, I returned wanting the kind of emotional communication I received at WTL. My husband is unable to give this--or at least no pattern of it has built up."²⁶

It seems to me these results are rather striking evidence of the growth that the majority of the participants in the Western Training Laboratory made. Many of these changes could be classified as growth in accepting and expressing intimate communication, feelings, and behavior. The fact that eighty-three per cent of all the responses indicated favorable effects from the experience indicates some validity of the T-Group laboratory type of experience for helping people in human relationships. Only four per cent indicated an unfavorable change, and those changes came primarily as the result of the change in behavior of others toward the self. The remaining thirteen per cent indicated no change.²⁷

This study by Schutz and Allen has provided results that gives strong support to the assumption that intellectual and emotional benefits can be derived from a T-Group laboratory. This particular research does indicate that in the total Western Training Laboratory experience the impact of the T-Group is central and the other activities seems to be peripheral.²⁸ Thus, as we have seen this approach can act as a powerful tool in helping a cross-section of adults resolve intimacy problems.

²⁷Ibid., p. 282.

²⁸Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EXPERIMENTAL TRAINING GROUP IN HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS FOR SINGLE YOUNG ADULTS

During the summer of 1966 for ten Saturday mornings from July third to September third, I acted as the trainer of an action research project using the T-Group as the model for helping nine single young adults explore their relationships. The purpose of this group was to find out how helpful such a group might be in terms of helping single young adults resolve the "intimacy crisis."

In this chapter I will discuss how the group was brought together, the kinds of information gathering devices that were used and I will explain the various developmental phases that the group went through in the T-Group before they were able to communicate to each other honestly and intimately.

A. How the Group Was Brought Together

The test group was drawn from the Wesley Fellowship of the First Methodist Church of Fullerton, California. A letter was sent to this group inviting those individuals who were interested in participating in ten two hour training sessions in human relationships. The letter that I sent to this group read as follows:

Hi members of the Wesley Fellowship,

This summer beginning Saturday morning, July third, from 7:30 to 9:30 A.M. a new experimental group designed for training in human relationships will be started. This group will meet for ten consecutive Saturday mornings ending on September third. The group will meet in the South Lounge (115) of First Methodist Church. Breakfast will be served at 7:30 preceding the training sessions. The training group will start at 8:00 A.M. and finish at 9:30 A.M.

There are two purposes for establishing this group. First, I plan to use some of the observations I will be making on this group in a dissertation I am writing for the seminary at Claremont. Secondly, this group will be designed in a unique way to help you grow in your understanding of human relationships. I am sure you will find your experience in this group different from any group experience you have ever had! I hope some of you will be daring enough to embark on this adventure with me.

If you are interested please fill out the personal data form that your advisor will give you and return it to him when it is completed.

I am looking forward to meeting those of you that plan to join me in this unique chance for personal growth.

See you Saturday morning July third at 7:30 A.M.

Sincerely yours,

I already had some indirect contact with this group through the senior minister of the church. Also the group knew that I had just been appointed as the minister of small groups at First Methodist Church, Fullerton. It was necessary for me to communicate with this group by letter, because I would not be leaving my

previous pastoral appointment in Los Angeles until July first.

Nine single young adults responded on the personal data form and showed up for the meeting on July third. The information sheets revealed the following information about the nine members that made up the group:

Age:

19 - 4
20 - 2
21 - 1
22 - 1
23 - 1

Sex:

Male - 5 (ages 20 to 23)
Female - 4 (all 19 years old)

Level of education:

Fullerton Jr. College 2nd year - 5
Cal. State Fullerton 3rd year - 2
4th year - 1
5th year - 1

Occupational plans:

Undecided - 3
Elementary teaching - 2
Sociology professor - 1
Ministry - 2
Music (concert stage) - 1

Employment:

Unemployed - 2
Knott's Berry Farm clerk - 2
Record store clerk - 1
Recreation director - 1
Clerk in department store - 1
Cook in drive-in - 1

Housing:

All living in parental home except for one fellow that lives in a rented room in a private home.

Groups:

All are members of the Wesley Fellowship
Campus Crusade for Christ
Sociology Society
Music Fraternity
Fellowship of Reconciliation
Young Republicans
Campus Philosophy Club
Rainbows
Young Democrats

In answering the question as to which group they felt had been most helpful in terms of understanding human relationships, they all felt that the Wesley Fellowship had been most helpful group experience.

Here are some of the typical responses to the question: What would you hope that a training group in human relationships might do for you personally?

I would hope that such a group would aid me in developing a better understanding of the way in which I characteristically respond to other persons and the way I view myself and how others view me.

Help me to deepen my relationships with my friends now. Help me to gain a better understanding of my own values, but mostly help me grow as a real concerned person.

I hope that we can benefit from each other. But not forget there are others outside of the group that we must not forget. In other words, I hope that we do not become labeled as the clique of the college group.

This last statement pointed out the real danger that this group might become a clique that would become exclusive of the Wesley Group. Dr. John Zimmer, the

senior minister who knows this group well, felt that the nine volunteers represented the "in group" of the total Wesley Fellowship. Also there were two couples that were dating. One couple were very serious about each other, while the second couple had a very uncommitted relationship. Thus, this group already had some degree of rapport before coming into the training situation because they all considered each other as friends.

B. Methods for Obtaining Data from the Group

1. Gathering Personnel Data. Three methods were used to get some basic information about each individual. First, the personal data sheet was used. The results have already been presented from that. Secondly, they were asked at the final session to make some sociometric choices. The question was as follows: "Name the three persons in this training group that you feel the closest to. Put them according to rank." Thirdly, I got some helpful information from Dr. John Zimmer, who was closely related to this group and from my wife who acted as observer. Her insights proved especially valuable in understanding various personalities.

2. Observing and Recording. Complete tape recordings were kept of every session except the first one,

because the tape recorder broke down. All the sessions were observed by my wife, who sat outside the group writing down observations. She observed every session except the eighth, when I sat outside the group as observer and she sat in the group as an "observer-participant." The role of the observer was to look for those factors or processes of group or individual interaction that either blocked or facilitated intimate communication.

3. Post-meeting Reaction Forms. After the first three sessions the group members were asked to fill out a post-meeting reaction form that asked the following questions:

a. How do you feel about this meeting? (Check one)
very dissatisfied - somewhat satisfied - neither
satisfied nor dissatisfied - quite satisfied - very
satisfied

b. Please comment on why you felt this way.

c. How do you feel about the quality of your participation in the group interaction? (Check one)
very dissatisfied - somewhat dissatisfied - neither
satisfied nor dissatisfied - quite satisfied - very
satisfied

d. If you are dissatisfied with the nature of your participation in the group, what do you feel hindered you from participating more fully in the group?

e. If you are satisfied with your participation in the group, what do you feel helped you participate more fully?

f. Were there any times when you wished to speak but did not? never - a few times - fairly often -
very often - almost all the time

g. How do you think our next meeting could be improved?¹

4. Final T-Group Reaction Form. At the close of the last session I asked each member to respond to a reaction form that attempts to get the respondent to put into writing their experience of intimacy in the group. Since the form was rather lengthy and would require some thought, I asked them to take it home and mail it to me when they had answered the questions. These questions and their results will be presented in the next chapter that deals specifically with the experience of intimacy in this particular group.

5. Agree-disagree Form. At the close of the second session I asked the group to respond to a questionnaire that asked questions dealing specifically with how they felt about the group, themselves, and the nature of their communication with members of the group. This method helped me better understand the nature of this particular group of people. Again the results and the questions will be presented in the next chapter.

All of these methods were used in order to gather information from the group. However, the most valuable

¹Matthew B. Miles, Learning to Work in Groups (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1959), p. 112.

help in terms of understanding the development of intimacy in this group were the tapes, my own observation, and the observations of my wife.

C. The Process of the Experimental Group Becoming a T-Group

Before we can look at the development of intimacy in a T-Group setting, we need to understand the development that the experimental group went through in order to produce a climate in which intimate communication could take place. Therefore, it is necessary to identify major areas of internal uncertainty or obstacles that must be overcome to some degree before intimate communication can take place. I plan to present the various phases that this group went through using the framework of T-Group "phase development" as presented by Warren G. Bennis from his clinical experience with many T-Groups.

1. Starting the T-Group. The debut of a T-Group causes a situation where the normal or usual control mechanisms that are taken for granted in most group situations are absent. The trainer, who does not take the role of leader does not qualify the usual structure, orderliness, specified amounts of intimacy or subject matter for the group life. Most individuals come to a group with some preconceived idea of what is going to happen. However,

the way a T-Group starts is very unexpected for every member of a T-Group, if they have not had any previous knowledge about this approach to group life. The group is confronted immediately by the fact that they must provide the data for their own learning through their here and now interactions. The trainer also informs them that he is not their leader and he drops them at this point. Thus, the group in a sense is faced with the dilemma of writing their own textbook. The ambiguity of the situation creates enough anxiety that the group must deal with two major problems. First, they must deal with their dependence problems, that is, there are always those members who receive a great deal of comfort from being in a group that has rules of procedure, an agenda, an expert or a leader. These persons are known as "dependents." While there is another group of persons in every T-Group that do not like structured situations with a clear authority or leader. These persons are known as "counterdependents." But both types are essentially conflicted in terms of dependence. Secondly, the group must deal with the problem of "interdependence," that is, how they characteristically handle interpersonal intimacy. The members that are unable to rest until they have a high degree of intimacy with everyone in the group are considered "overpersonal," while the members who

avoid intimacy are called "counterpersonal." However, both these types are conflicted persons.²

There are unconflicted persons that are known as "independents" that are more able to assess here and now situations and learn from that experience. But these persons also act at times in hostile and rebellious ways. However, I do not believe there were any individuals in the group that could be called "independents," although there were several that were less conflicted than others. It was the less conflicted persons that helped move the group on to its next phase of development.

In the opening phase of the group the initial remarks made by me were very important in terms of creating an ambiguous situation in which the "dependents" and "counterdependents" could deal with their authority relations and the "underpersonal" and "overpersonal" individuals could deal with personal relationships. Although the experimental group already had a fairly good sense of rapport with each, they all agreed that their personal relationships with each other were not very deep.

My opening statement to the group was as follows:

²Warren G. Bennis, "Patterns and Vicissitudes in T-Group Development," in Leland P. Bradford, Jack R. Gibb, and Kenneth D. Benne, T-Group Theory and Laboratory Method (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964), p. 252.

The experience we are going to have together for the next ten Saturday mornings is known as a training group in human relationships. This means that each of you is expected to use as the subject matter for this group the here and now interactions that we will have with each other. Also it is hoped you will explore those group processes that you feel are hindering or helping group interaction. You are to learn to observe each other's behavior and in turn share your observations about the group behavior and individual behavior. My role will be to act as trainer. However, I am not your leader. (Silence)

For nearly three minutes there was absolute silence as the anxiety increased. One of the fellows finally asked me to explain the purpose of the group again. I said, "You are to interact with each other until you learn how to observe as well as participate in the interaction. I am not the leader." However, from this point on the group began its struggle to become a training group in human relationships. In order to demonstrate the development of this group so that intimate communication could take place, I have used the "phase movements" as described by Warren Bennis to structure the development of the test group. Every T-Group tends to follow the pattern given by Bennis. He feels that all T-Groups must deal with two major phases--dependence and interdependence. Under each of these major phases, he lists three subphases. Under Phase I of dependence the three subphases are "dependence-flight, counterdependence-fight, and resolution-catharsis." Under Phase II of interdependence the three subphases are

"enchantment-flight, disenchantment-fight, and consensual validation."³

2. (Phase I: Dependence) Subphase 1: "Dependence-Flight." In this phase after the opening statement by the trainer the group behavior is primarily orientated toward warding off the anxiety created by the ambiguous situation. Almost the entire first session of the test group was spent struggling to find a common goal or a project that they all could do. There was a great deal of yawning, doodling, and intellectualizing--all attempts to ward off anxiety. The group tried to discuss a goal, but they could get nowhere, because of the struggle for leadership. Three of the fellows tried very hard to lead, but each attempt to take over the leadership was coldly ignored by the group, because the group was not ready to share leadership function. The "dependents" were the ones that were hoping that I would give them a goal. Bennis says this about the fruitless goal seeking:

It can be understood best as a dependence plea. The trainer, not the lack of a goal, is the cause of insecurity. He is presumed to know what the goals are or ought to be. Hence, his behavior is regarded as a technique; he is merely playing "hard to get." The group's pretense of a search for goals is a plea for him to tell the group what to do.⁴

³Ibid., p. 254.

⁴Ibid.

Thus, throughout this first session there were many attempts to discover the boundaries of the group and a few members indicated pleasure in being free to set their own boundaries as a group. There was very little group cooperation. Everyone acted as individuals and did not really bother to listen to what others had to say. Also a great deal of time was spent in "flight" behavior talking about what they had done in other group situations especially in Wesley Fellowship. When I suggested that the group try to deal with the here and now situation, I was met by stony silence and several of the "counterdependents" made some hostile remarks about my intervention. In fact it was this indirect rebellion that took the group into the next subphase.

3. Subphase 2: "Counterdependence-fight." Since I had failed to satisfy the dependency needs of the group, the "counterdependents" began to upset the life of the group even more. A real power struggle began for leadership, but in a way this was a technique to make clear my failure as a leader. Although the group would not recognize it, they were subtly punishing me for my incompetence in fulfilling their needs. This phase becomes the most destructive phase. One of the "counterdependents" made a powerful attempt to control the group by suggesting he

would destroy the group unless it did his bidding. The group listened, but they were unwilling to be intimidated and the other two fellows that were wanting to lead resisted his plea the most. Actually I detected that his destructive tantrum was indirectly a way of punishing me for my failure to meet his needs and expectations. One of the girls in the group expressed her turmoil over the situation and she named the three fellows involved in the power struggle. She said:

I'm just having a lot of trouble right now in my mind. It's going in a thousand directions. I'm trying to help Bill, when I don't know an answer myself. I'm trying to think that out. I don't know what in the heck Harold is thinking. He just looks half dead and I want to know what you think, Doug. I'm trying to be aware of all of you and I . . . I like this no structure, but it is threatening to me. Maybe because I don't know where to go. There are so many places to go I don't know where to start.

In this phase the central persons are the assertive "counterdependents and the dependent" members, while the less assertive dependents withdraw.⁵ Actually the group had formed subtly into two warring subgroups consisting of the leaders and members of the "counterdependents" and "dependents." These subgroups formed to ward off anxiety. The attempt by the one fellow to control the group through threats was really a way of absorbing the

⁵Ibid., p. 260.

uncertainty of the situation. Bennis describes how the group looks at the trainer in these words:

Group members see him at best ineffectual, at worst damaging to group progress. He is ignored and bullied almost simultaneously. His interventions are perceived by the counterdependents as attempts to interrupt group progress; by the dependents, as weak and incorrect statements. His silences are regarded by the dependents as desertion; by the counterdependents as manipulation. Much of the group activity is to be understood as punishment of the trainer, for getting the group into an unpleasant situation, for being the worst kind of authority figure--a weak and incompetent one, or a manipulative, insincere one.⁶

Thus, for about four sessions it seemed that the group was teetering on the brink of suicide in this dependent-counterdependent struggle. Indeed the group might have folded, if they had not made some strong challenge of the trainer directly or indirectly.

4. Subphase 3: "Resolution-catharsis." This particular phase was not as obvious as the other two developmental phases. Bennis defines this phase as "the resolution of the dependence needs and the real beginning of the acceptance of mutual responsibility for the fate of the group and its solidarity."⁷ I feel that the group never completely resolved their dependence needs and continued to vacillate between dependence conflicts and interdependence (interpersonal) conflicts. However, I

⁶Ibid., p. 256.

⁷Ibid., p. 259.

feel that there was an event in the fourth session that helped resolve a great deal of the authority dependence needs of the group. They challenged one of the fellows, who had a great deal of sociological and group training. This particular fellow had really been playing the role of the trainer's assistant and thus, he represented a replica of me to the group. The group spent almost an entire session berating him for modeling my behavior. It was through this event that the group began to deal with their feelings about me as an authority figure. This helped the group assess their responsibility for group life and it helped them accept me more as a group member who had special resources that might be helpful. The struggle for power in the group was somewhat dissipated and leadership seemed to take on more of a shifting shared responsibility. At any rate, the result was that the group seemed to have much more autonomy. When I made suggestions or observations, they were no longer openly ignored, but secretly attended to and used later on in various interaction.

However, the evidence that the group had never completely accepted me as a group member, occurred in the seventh session, when I announced that I intended to be just an observer outside the group interaction. I think their initial reaction is somewhat interesting.

Trainer: I'm not going to sit in the circle today,
I'll be an observer.

Harold: Oh. Okay! (independent, who wanted to
take the leadership)

John Z.: Are you kidding? (dependent)

Patti: I didn't mean to drive you there.
(dependent)

Bill: I don't think that's fair! (laughing)
(leader and counterdependent)

John Z.: That's not fair now I can't deliberately
not look at you. (hostile remark)

Doug: Who's going to lead the group? Who are we
going to look at?

Harold: A . . . now where's Jan and Claudia
(Harold answers that question and leads the
group into a long discussion about what each
person felt they had gotten from the group)

Although there are several obvious dependence
pleas, the group had one of their best sessions and they
seemed to have a good sense of solidarity. When I re-
turned to the group the next session, I was accepted much
more as a group member and it soon became clear that in
spite of all the conflict the warring subgroups had de-
veloped a sense of mutual support so that no one felt
isolated and helpless. Also I began to see that although
previously my suggestions had seemingly been ignored,
they had been secretly attended to and were brought up
to help facilitate group progress and interaction.

By the end of the seventh session the group was now primarily dealing with interpersonal questions (interdependence).

5. (Phase II: Interdependence) Subphase 4:
"Enchantment-flight." It was during sessions seven, eight, nine, and ten that the group really began to deal with problems relating to intimacy, friendship, cooperation, and identity. During the seventh session the group tried very hard to keep a sense of harmony and solidarity. Any tension or hostility was instantly dissipated by joking and laughter. The "overpersonals" were active in attempting to keep everything pleasant and loving, while the "underpersonals" sought to find safe subjects to talk about. In session eight the group was no longer able to keep this harmony, because it soon became evident that there were too many underlying hostilities and unresolved issues that needed tending to. The group immediately moved into subphase five in which the basic question or fight was concerning the degree of intimacy required by the group. It soon became obvious to the group that although ideally they should be able to work together they cannot. Again there was a subtle feeling that I picked up that they would like me to take over. Evidence of this was seen when there was almost

an audible sigh of relief, when I broke one of the group's long periods of silence with a suggestion. However, I did not solve their dilemma for them and they moved into a conflict that was similar to the one they had in earlier sessions over power, authority, and dependence. This time the fight was over how much interpersonal intimacy the group should share.

6. Subphase 5: "Disenchantment-fight." There was a great deal of anxiety created by mistrust and suspicion of various members. This started as various members began to make personal observations of each other that were in turn interpreted as personal attacks. The group began to ask some of the same questions they had asked in the first subphase of the group's life: What is a group? What are we doing here? What are the goals of the group? What do I have to give up, personally, to belong to this group? How much intimacy and affection are required? Actually the basic themes were invasion of privacy versus group giving.

The interaction more or less was dominated by a conflict between the "overpersonal" and the "underpersonal" individuals in the group. During this period of conflict there was more absenteeism, tardiness, and indirect statements about the worthlessness of the group. On two

occasions a different member asked for individual help from the group. But the group more or less ignored the problem. I felt that the reason the group was unable to deal with the intimate nature of these problems was because all the members of the group were wrapped up in their own identity problems.

However, with the end of the group experience nearing and a desire by most of the members to gain more insight into how they characteristically behave in a group, the group moved into a phase where they really began to evaluate each other's behavior.

7. Subphase 6: "Consensual Validation." The main activity of the group in the last two sessions was communication by several of the members of their system of interpersonal relations. They shared their own concepts they used to predict the consequences of their behavior and some of the more open members made helpful observations to these individuals.

At first there was a great deal of resistance to move towards evaluating each other's behavior. The "underpersonals" let it be known directly or indirectly that they felt such close communication was too threatening, while the "overpersonal" members felt it wasn't fair to discriminate among group members. To them role

evaluation was a form of judgment. But the fear of rejection was diminished as various individuals were able to verbalize their own understanding of self-behavior and the behavior of others. Bennis lists five values that help a group reach a high level of communication. The test group did develop these values to some degree.

(1) Members can accept one another's differences without associating "good" and "bad" with the differences. (2) Conflict exists, but it is over substantive issues rather than emotional issues. (3) Consensus is reached as a result of rational discussion rather than through a compulsive attempt at unanimity. (4) Members are aware of their own involvement and other aspects of group process, without being overwhelmed or alarmed. (5) Through the evaluation process, members take on greater personal meaning to one another.⁸

Now certainly the group did not come to a real strong actualization of these values, but they were able to experience some intimacy. This last phase was incomplete, because the group hurried through it realizing that time was running out. I believe that a greater depth could have been achieved with more time.

D. The Trainer's Influence on Group Development

Certainly my role as trainer had a great deal to do with the development of the group. The basic theory of T-Group behavior is that the trainer attempts to

⁸Ibid., pp. 264-265.

approximate the kind of behavior desired for forming a T-Group. In other words, the trainer should attempt to model the kind of behavior that he expects of the trainees as participants in a T-Group. Three basic kinds of behavior that a trainer should ideally attempt to model in a T-Group are trust (confidence), openness (a spontaneity of communication), permissiveness (allowing group to solve its own problems and do its own self-assessment).⁹ The trainer should encourage the group to observe and discuss its own experiences, while at the same time being alert to the misuse of observation and feedback by those group members trying to dominate or attack other group members.¹⁰

I did not fully live up to the above mentioned ideals. I spent far too much time modeling behavior that illicited self-analysis from group members, which tended to focus the group on individual personalities rather than on the interaction going on between persons. Because of this, there were several individuals who attempted to exploit the group for depth interpretations of their behavior. The group was not able to carry out

⁹Gibb, "Climate for Trust Formation," in Ibid., p. 298.

¹⁰"Exploration in Human Relations Training, An Assessment of Experiences from 1947-1953" (University of Michigan, 1953), p. 41.

these demands because of their own self-concern.

Since I had never been in the role as a trainer for a T-Group, I tended to function most of the time as a silent observer. Before coming to the T-Group situation the various members had already established a bond of friendship. Therefore, I presumed that I probably would be treated more as an outsider. Upon this presupposition I decided I would not be overly intrusive in my comments. Instead I tended to maintain an open wait and see attitude. Another presupposition that I made was that the presence of my wife as observer, my ambiguous role as the trainer, and the tape recorder would all act as non-directive kinds of structure for the group that would communicate the idea that something was supposed to happen. The group knew before the first meeting that they were to be members of a training group in human relationships, but how they were to become this type of group was not clearly defined for them. Thus, I knew the kind of behavior that the trainer modeled would tend to be followed by the group because of their dependency needs as well as the threat posed by the ambiguity of the situation.

Actually, at first, I was far more intrusive than I intended to be. I made far too many observations of

personal behavior rather than observations concerning the interactions and processes going on between persons or in the group as a whole. My observations of personal behavior tended to block group processes, because such observations focused the attention of the group on one person and freed the group from dealing with the processes going on in the total group.

I found that the best way that the trainer could facilitate intimacy was by being open and honest in personal interactions. When I was willing to listen deeply and reflectively in a non-judgmental way various individuals were more willing to reveal their feelings about themselves and about others in the group.

My style of leadership tends towards two extremes. I either talk too much and thus block others from talking or I remain silent too long until group interaction becomes chaotic or unconstructively silent. However, it must be recognized that a certain amount of ambiguity can be utilized as a means to explore those processes that are either blocking or facilitating creative group interaction and growth.

Another technique that I failed to use as trainer was having various members act as observers outside the group and then report back their observations at the end of the session. Also role playing could have been a very

excellent tool for facilitating group communication. Another mistake that I made was the fact that I made far too many interventions that were poorly timed or not in context with the feeling tone of the group. In spite of these mistakes the group did experience some intimate communication.

In the next chapter I will deal in greater detail with the experiences of intimacy as the group saw them during this ten week period.

CHAPTER V

THE EXPERIENCE OF INTIMACY IN THE EXPERIMENTAL T-GROUP

One of the most difficult tasks posed by this particular experimental T-Group was to find a way to assess the experience of intimacy in the group as well as among individual members. Because of the great many variables present in such a situation, it was almost impossible to come up with any degree of exactness as to the nature and quality of the intimacy that was experienced. In this chapter I will present the results of the various methods I used to assess the experience of intimacy. The results of the agree-disagree form, the taped recorded dialogue, the post-meeting reaction forms, and my own observations will all be used as indicators of the nature of the intimacy experienced in this particular group of single young adults.

A. The Results of the Agree-Disagree Form on Questions of Identity and Intimacy

At the end of the first session I gave the Agree-Disagree form that asked thirteen questions dealing with identity and intimacy. Five of the questions dealt specifically with identity problems, while the remaining

eight questions concerned intimacy problems. I observed throughout the ten meetings that the most consistent strategy used by various members to get close to one another was by means of self-confession. It was a rare occasion when the group was able to respond to these confessions with intimate constructive communication. I believe that this approach at self-revelation was an indication that most of the members were hard at work on their own identity problems. This approach was an easy substitute for giving oneself to another person in care and understanding.

1. The Results of the Agree-Disagree Form on Identity. The results from the agree-disagree form that dealt with problems of identity seemed to bear out my observation of the group behavior:

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
The main thing that makes relationship difficult for me is the fact that I'm pretty confused about who I am myself.	7	2
When I feel lonely, I feel like there is no one I can really talk to that will accept me just as I am.	6	3
Because of my inability to control or understand my sexual feeling, I find it hard to have close relationships with members of the opposite sex.	3	6

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
I have trouble getting beyond my own personal concerns in order to be concerned about others or about the life of any particular group I may belong to.	6	3
Because I have trouble accepting myself, I find it hard to accept others.	5	4

These results certainly indicate that the majority of the individuals in this group were blocked from close personal relationship by problems of "identity diffusion." Although most of the individuals at some time during the group experience verbalized the opinion that they were all good friends, it is a rather striking contradiction that two-thirds of the group felt lonely and felt they didn't have anyone they could really talk to who would accept them as they were.

Only one-third of the group felt they were blocked in relationships with the opposite sex because of sexual feelings. However, it must be mentioned that the questions on sex may have been more of a threat than how they actually felt about sex. But it is interesting to note that throughout the group experience sex was a taboo subject. However, one fellow did get brave and confess some real doubts about his sexual identity. The group was so threatened by his self-disclosure that they were unable to

help him or even respond to him. They simply listened in anxious silence and then went to a subject that was less threatening. Unfortunately, I was acting as an observer during this particular session and was not able to help the group deal with this question.

In a final post-meeting reaction form I asked the participants to discuss those dynamics that they found in themselves that they felt blocked close intimate communication with other in the group. I feel that some of their responses further illuminate the depth of the identity struggle that some of the group members were going through. Some of these responses were as follows:

Bill: My inability to relax and my fear of getting close to an individual blocked intimate communication for me. I found myself blocking myself out of the group by taking the role of the activator. I also will try and get one who is remaining silent to interact.

Claudia: The block is fear. Fear of having oneself open in front of a bunch of people. When someone gets close, boom--the block comes running up. I bring the block up. I want to learn more about myself, but I refuse to let that happen.

Ellen: There were times when emotion blocked me in closer communication, because when we would "attack" others because of some fault of our own (being insensitive, etc.). When this happened the walls would go up all around and the group would start taking sides. This was sheer death for any type of communication. We would start to talk at each other instead of to each other. Our insensitivity often led to remarks which were cutting though the person who spoke them may not have realized it. As much as I hate to say it, another thing that blocked real communication between us was our silences. Ordinarily I think silences are helpful and I enjoy them, but in our

group they became obstacles. We each followed our own train of thought and didn't help the group's sensitivity. Possibly this was just because we each had our own hang-ups. Laughing and cutting up also blocked communication. It was a way out of tight places. We could become insensitive again for a while.

The following dialogue indicates an attempt by several members of the group to get beyond the identity struggle to real communication of intimacy. The ambivalence of fear of and desire for honest communication is portrayed in this dialogue taken from the tape:

Ellen: I don't understand how you can change. What it seems to me Bill is asking is How can I communicate with people? But how can I break down before you do?

Bill: But how can you relate to somebody to let them know who Ellen is?

Trainer: Didn't she more or less say she didn't really do this?

John: Isn't that what everybody has essentially been saying that we all have that problem. Isn't that what Harold and Doug have been saying?

Trainer: I felt like Ellen has been trying to tell us that deep down she doesn't show the true Ellen. Is that what you feel Ellen?

Ellen: Yes, It's true. Harold has seen some of me.

Doug: I'm hung up because I . . . I . . . I place myself in this position--Yet I know this is a plea on my part for concern.

Trainer: Do you see Bill doing the same things?

Doug: Yes, but I don't know whether I see or maybe I can't get past this point for myself to try and understand him. I just can't get past the fact we all have problems and yet we bring them to this table to discuss them knowing that from the group, being as good as friends as we are, that we will receive

sympathy, because we have a problem. And for myself-- I'm not saying, you know, that this is what you are doing Bill. But for myself I never get passed this point. This is where I get stopped. Invariably I close my ears to what anybody is saying, because I am concerned with what I'm going through of feeling sorry for myself and this seems to be something I can see everytime I do this. This is why many times I can't bring a problem up in this group, because I know I will be followed with exactly the same thing I did in the last group. It's not necessarily not trusting the group. It means being willing to trust the fact that maybe I do have a problem and to look at it from some other viewpoint than the one that is always put before me--that everybody feels sorry for me--everybody feels empathy for me. That's what I feel from you Ellen. I get from you almost a motherly feeling of concern for me, but there doesn't seem to be . . . a . . . some constructive listening other than the fact that Ellen would like to help me and a Ellen feels it's her Christian duty, or you know, maybe Ellen feels for me, you know, but I fall into the same pattern, because you react the way everybody else does. When I finally come out of being cool to people, everybody thinks that sort of neat, because Doug is being warm to someone. But it follows, because I see it all the time, I just don't do it anymore, because I'm looking for people to react differently. But I always get the same thing and I don't want the same thing. You know you talk about laying your soul on the line--giving yourself or putting yourself out . . . a . . . I don't really think I know who myself is. I don't know what I'm laying out, but I do know what I'm laying out I've laid out before.

Trainer: Has Bill laid out himself before you in a group?

Doug: I don't know, I've never been in this kind of group with Bill before.

John: It seems like what everybody has been saying or hinting around at--is that they would really like for other people in the group to be honest about how they feel about someone else. Actually I feel the same way Doug does about it. I don't need to share problems in order to get people's sympathy. I really need to have people tell me exactly how they feel about me.

How I act. What they honestly feel about me. But it's hard to tell someone exactly how you feel about them. That can be more threatening.

Bill: I think Doug and John have hit it right on the nose. You know Claudia when you hit me with that Christian sympathy bit it really turned me off.

Claudia got very defensive and then the group began to break into two warring groups. However, the above dialogue was taken from the third session in an eloquent plea for honest dialogue and real intimacy. But the group was not yet far enough along in its "phase development" to share as was suggested. We also can clearly see that there was also a tremendous block to experiencing intimate communication because of personal concern about identity.

2. The Results of the Agree-Disagree Form on Intimacy. The results from the agree-disagree form that dealt with relationship and intimacy seemed to support my observation that the depth of interpersonal intimacy shared among the group members was rather limited.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
1. In this group most of our personal relationships are not very deep even though all kinds of persons are pretty well accepted.	9	0
2. I feel like I have to hide or wear a false front around others in this group.	2	7

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
3. It is very difficult for me to share honestly and openly with members of the opposite sex.	3	6
4. It is very difficult for me to share of myself honestly and openly with this particular group of people.	5	4
5. I feel that the people in this group do not really know me as I am, because I often feel when I am talking to them I am not really conveying myself to them, nor are they conveying themselves to me.	6	3
6. I feel that I know very little about the meaning of close mutually satisfying relationships.	6	3
7. I am lonely a good bit of the time.	5	4
8. I have very few meaningful friendships in my life.	6	3

It is very difficult to know how honest the participants were in answering these questions. I am sure the honesty level was increased by the fact that these questions were answered anonymously. Also the results would have been much more significant, if I had given the same set of questions at the end of the group experience.

Two-thirds of the group did not consistently answer on one side or the other of a question, but they shifted their responses from question to question. The

most obvious contradiction can be seen between the results of question two and question five. The two questions are essentially the same, but are worded differently. This might indicate their ambiguous feelings about themselves and how they relate to others in the group. However, the majority may have disagreed with question two because it was a rather severe judgment to make on one's self, while question five was much more subtle and less condemning. Certainly we cannot be sure. However, the unanimous belief that relationships were really not very deep in this group even though they considered each other as friends indicates that they had not experienced much intimacy together.

B. Examples of Intimate Communication in the T-Group

As was indicated in Chapter Four the group went through a great deal of struggle before any real intimate communication took place. When the group realized that the T-Group experience was about to come to an end, they made greater effort at trying to open up avenues of real concern. However, because of the many non-verbal cues involved in intimate communication, it was difficult to find on the tapes obvious examples of intimate communication.

It is difficult to say which kind of behavior blocked or facilitated intimate communication in the group. However, on the final post-meeting reaction form I asked the group to tell what things going on in personal interactions within the group that either facilitated or blocked intimate communication. Here are several of their comments:

Ellen: Some of the dynamics that I felt helped facilitate intimate communication were real honesty and sincerity on the part of all the members. Also the sharing of ideas by all with sensitive listening sometimes helped. If our honesty sometimes involved becoming emotional this only strengthened communications (if it was constructive honest opinion). Looking directly at persons also increased the effectiveness of communicating an idea or feeling. Because we finally trusted each other we were able to "let ourselves go" and show our real emotions which we ordinarily wouldn't.

Jan: Letting down the barriers by approaching a person in an objective non-critical way helped promote closer communication. The barriers arose when people began accusing or telling, but only when they began suggesting or talking was I comfortable enough to deal with what they were telling me.

Patty: It appeared to me everyone involved was trying their best to be honest as they possibly could, at least more honest than ever before. Also I quickly sensed a feeling of mutual trust that was very helpful.

Claudia: I found that the differences in personalities blocked at first, but many times it helped the group. Doug might have been too bold in his honesty and at times this blocked me. But on the whole as we were willing to be honest with each other our relationships deepened. True, it was hard to get it at first but it grew in time.

Another question that I asked on the final post-meeting reaction form was to describe one specific incident in the group in which they felt that intimate personal communication had taken place either between themselves and the group or an individual. Here are some of those responses:

Ellen: A meaningful incident took place when Doug and John spoke to me about how I often acted or appeared to others. They actually talked with me about it, which is something they had never really done before. When Doug shared some of his feelings that day about himself it was the turning point in our relationship: no more GAMES!

Bill: I feel that when I shared my problem of wanting to give up on all of my projects and groups because of my relationship problems with my fiancé that I was communicating deeply with the whole group. At first I was rather blasé about the whole thing, but I found myself talking to more than just a group. It went deeper than that I realized that I was just like them and that helped me more than any medicine.

Jan: Real communication took place between me and the group the specific time when I was "on the spot" as to my standing toward myself in particular and toward others in general. It really gave me a different view of myself the time I got "yelled at" for beating around the bush all the time--for being afraid to get to the heart of the matter.

Patty: The one time that meaningful communication involved me was when everyone took a look at me and told me how I came on as a person to them individually and also how I could be better as a person relating to others.

Thus, we can see that many different factors helped or blocked individuals in their communication. Sometimes the long group silences were an expression of group

closeness and solidarity, while other times the silences were anxious and hostile indicating an unwillingness to get close. Several times tears and expressions of emotion brought individuals closer together. But sometimes hostility and judgmental attacks forced individuals farther apart. On several occasions open honest confession by one member helped others express honest feelings about themselves and others. But also several confessions opened up problems that were too difficult for the group to handle and they would retreat into silence in order to keep their distance from the situation. What for one person helped communication for another blocked it.

The last question on the final post-meeting reaction form asked the participants if anyone of their three choices of the persons they felt closest to was based on the result of the group experience. Three persons answered "yes" to this question. They were then asked to explain what happened that made the difference. One girl said, "My feelings about John are based on my experience with him in the group. The time when he shared his honest feelings about me was very meaningful and I felt as though I could consider him a friend." John also chose Patty as one of the three persons he felt closest to. He explained it this way: "I felt close to Patty, the time we (or I) found out who she really was.

When she volunteered information of her own accord with little, if any pressure from the group." Here is an illustration of John's attempt to communicate intimate feelings directly to Patty.

John: (to Patty with a great deal of anxiety in his voice) I can't help but feel that--that a . . . you . . . you must have some desire to come here because . . . I can't see if a person didn't really want to come they wouldn't make a half hour drive every Saturday morning at 6:30 A.M. to be here. To me that is a big sacrifice. (group laughs) I can't help but feel that you must a . . . want something . . . a . . . you're looking for something. You must want a . . . a . . . I'm sympathetic towards you (voice gets soft and full of anxiety) . . . I . . . want . . . Oh (sighs) I've got so much anxiety, I guess . . . I don't know what the word is . . . it's just something inside me that just . . . uh (sighing deeply with anxiety) Oh well (firmly) let's be honest the first time I saw you I thought "she's really beautiful" and then . . . a . . . later I sort of got to--sort of got to know you just from observing and watching the way you act and react and so forth. This is how I learn about people and things in life. I participate and then I observe a (voice getting softer) there's just . . . a . . . something about you. . . . Well . . . I like you (voice trailing off) but . . . a . . . I don't know now I'm all lost. I'm all hazy.

Patty: Yes, I;m looking for something, but it's very hard for me to talk unless someone draws me out. I don't want this to get between us . . . (voice very soft).

Ellen: We . . . we haven't really had a chance yet to get close, but do you remember the other nite over at Jan's. (Ellen also trying to get close to Patty.) Well, I don't know . . . it's always been easy for me to blow my stack, but you don't seem to be free to do that.

Patty: I know, but I was just thinking the other day I could count only about four times in my life that I have really blown my top. That's not very many times

in nineteen years.

John: (just coming out of his haze) I . . . I wrote a poem once entitled "No Man Is an Island--That I Don't Believe," but I have since changed my mind. We need to share our lives.

Patty: I don't feel that we don't need one another, it's a . . . a . . . just that it's hard for me to get close to people. They have to draw me out.

Ellen: We want to get together and things, you know. We have time together . . . I think you feel free, but it just doesn't seem like it.

Patty: And yet we never have enough time together. That is one of the reasons I come all the distance on Saturday morning, because it is my only chance in the week, I get sooo wrapped up in my family (exasperation in her voice) that I scream for one night or four or five hours a week that I can spend with one friend and I barely get it.

Doug: How you react with the group and with Ellen when you do get into this situation doesn't make any difference, if you're so used to keeping your thoughts and feelings inside. For instance when you're around your family or around people that you feel are not always willing to accept what you are going to say. Why should being in a group like this for a short period of time without saying anything make any difference? I think for myself it takes a period of time in which you get to know and trust an individual. I find more and more it's a matter of trusting an individual. I find this is true in my own family situation. I'm sure that if I trusted the members of my family more, I probably would be more of a real person to them and be more willing to blow my top as you say Patty.

Patty: The thing is with me is I somehow start out trusting almost then something happend whether it be with my parents or friends or anything (exasperated) tch . . . that's that . . . Or with my family I've had to learn to keep my mouth shut and that "things were going to happen if I didn't," but it seems to come more naturally with friends.

In this exchange it became clear that the participants are beginning to understand that real intimacy requires trusting one another and taking the risk of being open to one another. But again we can hear the fear of getting really involved. Patty makes it clear that her parents have forced her into a position of "playing it safe." She wants the relationship of "I-Thou," but she knows it is safer to relate to others on the "I-It" level. To share one's feelings with another opens up the possibility of the "I-Thou" relationship.

However Patty for the first time really came out of herself. The group continued to interact with her in a close meaningful way so that she continued to express her feelings and desires for ten more minutes. My observation (I was sitting outside the group as an observer) was that this was a real turning point in her relationship with the group and with John, Doug, and Ellen in particular. Also the intimate communication helped others in the group overcome their fear of letting down their masks and making an attempt to communicate honestly and openly.

Here is an illustration of some dialogue in which emotion and honest communication helped deepen two relationships between Doug and Ellen and Doug and Bill. On the final reaction form both these dyads chose each other as one of the three persons they felt closest to, while

Ellen specifically mentioned that she felt closer to Doug because of the group experience. The dialogue is as follows:

Doug: Maybe what I'm trying to relate to Bill is that an abrupt change is not the answer. I think somehow trying to grow and relate with this problem and to find some core to begin with instead of trying to run by cutting off all relationships is the answer. I certainly can't help you Bill, I wouldn't even try . . . a . . . I would say that I would back you up.

Ellen: Aren't you contradicting yourself, Doug?

Doug: But I mean . . . I don't I mean helping him from the standpoint of Bill talking with me or you know my giving him words of wisdom.

Trainer: Maybe he's asking for relationship with you-- for honesty and non-critical listening.

Bill: I didn't ask for advice, Doug.

Doug: I know.

John: That's what it sounded like.

Jan: Yeah.

John: You didn't say that directly, but I felt that.

Bill: I just want something . . . somebody relate with me so that I can change. (Doug is unable to deal with Bill's plea and turns to Ellen.)

Doug: Well, a Ellen what I think I have been trying to say for a long time for our relationship is that I have never been able to put into words is that your sympathy hurts me more than it helps me. Your concern and understanding I accept and I know that you know that it is there, but it allows me to fall back upon playing a game with you.

Ellen: (emotionally) Well my trouble with you Doug is that everytime Tom or I . . . And I'm not saying Tom is all right or I'm all right or anything. Everytime

anybody I've ever known around you tries to lay you on the line you turn them off. That's just what you did to me.

Trainer: Maybe, Ellen, that approach of laying Doug on the line is a little bit judgmental and that's what turns him off.

Ellen: I know and I try not to do it . . . I'm just really . . . you know . . . I don't know what to do. I mean I've tried everything imaginable with Doug that I can think of. I just don't know where to go. (Doug give an anxious laugh.)

John C.: I observe that your approach to Doug is one designed to try and change him rather than accept him as he is. Can you be what you really are with Doug?

Ellen: I'm trying to be myself. Well, I'm not really. It's not only for Doug and myself too. That's where I'm at a loss too . . . I'm because . . . I'm (voice breaks with emotion) so in . . . orbit right now. Then I go to Doug. Well I just don't know. You hurt my ego.

John C.: It really makes me feel good to hear you expressing your feelings for once. I'll say that.

Ellen: (big sigh of anxiety and frustration) But . . . I . . . I do appreciate your honesty, Doug. It has helped me even though I'm pretty confused right now. (Then Harold her former boyfriend indirectly affirmed what Doug had been saying.)

Harold: All this talk about change . . . One thing that Bill and I have in common is this idea of control. I think we have to come to realize our boundaries so that we can learn to make room for margin. I don't see how everybody gets so tied up in this. I just hate sympathy and it makes me mad when I want sympathy, a . . . not mad, but just disgusts me and God I just can't see why people can't just respect each other and be themselves instead of crusading to change people. Yet on the other hand I feel everyone has to stop and realize . . . well, maybe we don't want to change, but just be accepted as we are.

In this episode we can see how Ellen's need to help other people causes her to be overly sympathetic without really "entering into" dialogue with those she cares about. By being overly sympathetic she forced Doug into a role of feeling sorry for himself. Here is an example of real intimacy being blocked by Ellen's need to be "overpersonal" as well as by her own identity confusion. However, the honest communication Doug and Harold had with Ellen in this dialogue was the first step in helping Ellen see herself and how she relates. As a result of this interaction and several other exchanges, Ellen deepened her relationship with Doug and she came to see that she had been mothering both Doug and Harold with sympathy. Thus, emotion and feelings expressed towards another person can be avenues to deeper self-understanding and intimacy.

For instance, Doug was named on the final post-meeting reaction form by Claudia as one of the three persons that she felt closest to as a result of the group experience. She said, "I grew to know and understand Doug much better and I came to realize by thoughts about him were wrong. The outburst of anger and crying helped me see myself better and in the long run helped me like Doug better." I would like to present this episode of interaction as an example of intimacy that did make a

difference in the relationship between Claudia and Doug.

(Claudia has just finished trying to explain to Bill what her boyfriend, John Z. was saying to him.)

Doug: I don't see why you feel you have to try and communicate for John.

Claudia: I'm not (raises voice pitch).

Doug: I . . . I really think you are. I think John needs to a communicate for himself. Why can't if Bill is talking to John and wants an answer from John about John, why can't John work it out himself without you telling everybody how he does it?

Claudia: I'm not doing that.

Doug: I think you are! (judgmentally)

Claudia: (Frustration and anger in her voice) Well I don't think so.

Doug: Because why can't John say it himself? I think this is what happens. You are saying for John what John should be saying to Bill. It's the way John reacts. Why can't he say it to Bill.

Claudia: (begins to cry and withdraw)

Bill: Oh, come on now Claudia don't go into your hole again.

Claudia: I'm in it! (voice breaking with emotion)

Bill: (really threatened by the tears) Come on Claudia lets work it out. Now it's just the idea Claudia that possibly . . . a . . . Don't get that wall up (Claudia crying) I just can't communicate! Man, I'm getting lost.

Trainer: I think she is putting the wall up to Doug.

Bill: Yes, I know.

Trainer: What turns you off when he (Doug) reacted the way he did?

Claudia: (through her tears) Because I . . . I don't think I was talking for him. I don't think (begins to be irrational) if Bill was asking how he communicates . . . Johnny wasn't saying anything and Bill wanted to know what he . . . he couldn't get across. I got the idea I wasn't talking for him and he can go and repeat it if he wants too.

Doug: You are using the word "he" all the time.

Claudia: Okay! (angrily) John Z. over there!

Doug: What really bothered me is that . . . a . . . this to me is the problem . . . a well . . . of communication in the group is that John doesn't answer any of these questions to us.

Claudia: To me you were telling me to shut up and keep out of the group!

Doug: No I wasn't!

Claudia: Well, to me you did!

Trainer: Do you suppose Doug that what you did say was put strongly so that she picked up the judgment in your voice and then put her walls up? Do you think it bordered on an attack?

Doug: Maybe I was mad and maybe if you can show your emotion on this, Claudia, maybe I can in saying it's my turn to be upset about something, because I think this is this is what happened . . . a . . . I . . . I would like to hear John speak!

Claudia: Who wouldn't (crying--wishing John would come to her rescue)

Doug: But I don't . . . I just got so mad, because you were standing up for him.

Claudia: No, I don't think I was (sobbing) I just feel I wasn't!

Doug: And I don't get anything from John, but I get it all from Claudia and Claudia interprets what John is saying to me or saying to Bill. (Claudia gets up and leaves the group crying.)

This interchange is an example of what happens when one person makes an observation about another person's behavior in a judgmental way. In spite of the fact that Claudia and Doug were really upset with each other, this angry dialogue acted as a catalyst that brought Claudia and Doug closer together in later sessions. In the next session Doug expresses what this interchange with Claudia had meant to him. Also he describes what the T-Group experience had generally done for him. He says:

Doug: I think more than anything, what I've learned in the group is that people have the same problems. My problem of being a snob--not that I want to be--many times is because I'm afraid that that no one else would be willing to look at the things that bother me--on on . . . a . . . more of a human level. But I know that a lot of it I have created for myself--the way people feel about me. I feel that through the group I've learned that it's obviously not the way I want to be. The only way possibly I can do anything about it is to bring it out. Obviously the way isn't to hold it in and it's really hard. It is not easy to bring out something you have kept inside for a long time. It upset me last when Claudia cried, because of what I said to her. I used to think of myself as the type of person that would make someone unhappy. Because I know I did with Claudia and I'm sure I've made Ellen unhappy a few times in the last year. But nobody has really cried in front of me because of what I said. (said softly and with emotion) (group has listened very emphatically)

Ellen: You just weren't around buddy! (group laughs)

Doug: That--that really shook me, because I realize . . . maybe it is not what I'm saying, but the way I'm saying it. Maybe it's the way I look when I say it or the attitude I give. You build up for yourself an image of what you want to be and strange enough the thing is that many people help you. Many people

will allow you to be that phony image! I've learned in the group too that what I saw in Claudia last week was something that maybe I felt I didn't think Claudia was really being Claudia. Maybe this is a reflection on the fact that some of you people don't let me be who I want to be, because you let me go along with the things I do or say and Claudia's crying was probably the first person who ever really reacted outwardly in front of me to what I say. It really upset me, but it also helped me look at how I relate my observations and feelings about another person.

The fact that somebody was willing to express an honest emotion towards Doug even though it was in anger, helped him get a new insight into his own identity. Claudia had helped Doug see that his honest observations of others was not real communication or intimacy, because it was done with a critical attitude.

I would like to present one more final and short example of intimate communication where Bill expresses how he feels about Patty. This interchange helped free Patty from her silences.

Bill: I feel that you really want to say something. Patty I feel just like you want so much to express yourself. A . . . a you know, I . . . I've (voice nervous) grown to like you so much during the course of this group . . . a a . . . not just like a passing friend. I have been able to see something in you . . . in not being like everybody else. It's just the idea that I have grown to like Patty so much more than in our experience in the Tuesday evening group. I've been able to see something a . . . a in her you know not like everybody else in the group or at least not like me anyway.

Patty: I had that said to me the other day. This is almost like a repeat of this conversation. This person said they had had never met anyone like me before in their life. You know what the deal is. It's not that I stick out like a sore thumb or something! I'm not that different I hope!

Bill: No, you're not different than anyone I've ever met before, because you're an exact copy of Diane (his fiancée) . . . Well, I mean . . . a . . . well that you're not an exact copy of a copy (embarrassed) (she laughs nervously) and a . . . a this is why a . . . a I've been able to a really a so much a . . . I've begun to really like you so much . . . more than before, when you were just a passing friend.

After this exchange between Bill and Patty, in future meetings they spoke to each other much more freely and openly. Patty made Bill one of her three choices of the persons she felt closest to as a result of the group experience. When asked what made the difference she said, "My feeling of closeness to Bill has something to do with the opportunities the T-Group gave me to observe and talk with him." Bill's rather anxious attempt to express warm feelings for Patty was a real breakthrough in their relationship. It was an affirmation for Patty and a new experience for Bill to express this kind of warm feeling for another person in front of a group of people. This was the beginning of real intimacy in which these two persons attempted to affirm each other's "worlds" by mutual recognition. This interchange represents the beginning of an "I-Thou" experience because there was a

real "meeting" in which they saw each other as real persons.

All of the examples of dialogue presented have been attempts to illustrate attempts by this particular group of single young adults to experience intimacy. Certainly, this group did not experience at any great depth the kind of intimacy defined by Erikson, Snyder, and Buber in Chapter Two. In each of the dialogues presented we can see that the problems of fear, mistrust, and identity blocked to some degree the experiencing of full psychological intimacy.

C. The Results of the Final Post-Meeting Reaction Form

Here is a complete list of the questions that were asked as a final post-meeting reaction. These questions were given to the group to take home after the next to the last meeting. The questions were as follows:

1. What dynamics going on in the personal interactions within the group have helped facilitate deeper, closer and more intimate communication? What has blocked?
2. As a result of this group experience, what dynamics have you found in yourself that tend to block deeper, closer and more intimate communication with others in the group?
3. Based on what you have learned from this group experience what changes would you like to make in the way in which you relate to others?

4. What difficulties do you foresee in making these changes?
5. How do you feel that your experience in this group might help you in interpersonal relationships outside the group?
6. Describe, if possible, one specific incident in this group in which you felt that a meaningful and deeply personal communication took place between yourself and another person or between yourself and the entire group.
7. Name the three persons in this training group that you feel the closest to. Put them according to rank 1, 2, or 3.
8. Are any of your choices based on the results of this group experience? If so, what happened that made the difference?

I have already presented in various parts of this chapter the results of questions one, two, six and parts of seven and eight. Here are several responses to questions three and four that deal with areas of change that individuals hope to make as a result of the group experience as well as the difficulties they see in making these changes:

Ellen: I'm going to have to learn to listen to people (and I mean really listen). I don't want to always be thinking about the point I wanted to make. I also don't want to appear to others as a "goody" Christian. I want to be able to love and accept people without trying to change them. I find myself wanting people to be won over to my point of view. I love them and accept them but all the time with the thought in the back of my mind that "hopefully they'll change." (Does that mean that I don't really "accept" them? I think so.)

Ellen: The difficulties in making these kinds of changes are great for me. I'm going to have to change my whole philosophy of life (not in thought but in practice). My attitude concerning the most important things in life (i.e., love, relationships, real communication) leads me to downgrade other people whose lives center around clothes, popularity, etc. Because I feel they aren't being honest persons I think of them as completely wasted, and I find I can't accept people for what they are when they have as great the potential as they do. I need to really live with more types of people. Also I want my friends to be aware of the kind of change that I want to take place in my attitude, etc. But it often seems that my friends are SNOOTY in this way too.

Claudia: I would like to change the way people see me, the way I come on to another person. The difficulties any person has changing one's self. Running into the question of "Do I really want to?" then after that's answered finding a way.

Patty: I would like to be more forward. To be specific, unafraid (of myself) to speak up and say my opinion.

Patty: Basically I am inhibited by fear. A fear that what I say will be laughed at or questioned.

Jan: I must learn to listen to others, to see what they are really seeking to express. Tolerance must become a more important word in my vocabulary.

Jan: I feel my family situation may be a hinrance. I must constantly battle and I am afraid this could carry into my other relationships. Returning home after every day may allow me to more easily slip into past habits.

Bill: I would like to learn to relax with others. I want to be able to not become a chronic activator without destroying participation.

Bill: Making myself want to do it so bad that I will do it and not talk about it. I'm so used to this way now that I fear change per chance that I fail. Maybe that's what I fear more than change--failure.

Here are a few responses from question five that give some indication how some of the participants felt the group might help them in interpersonal relationships outside the group.

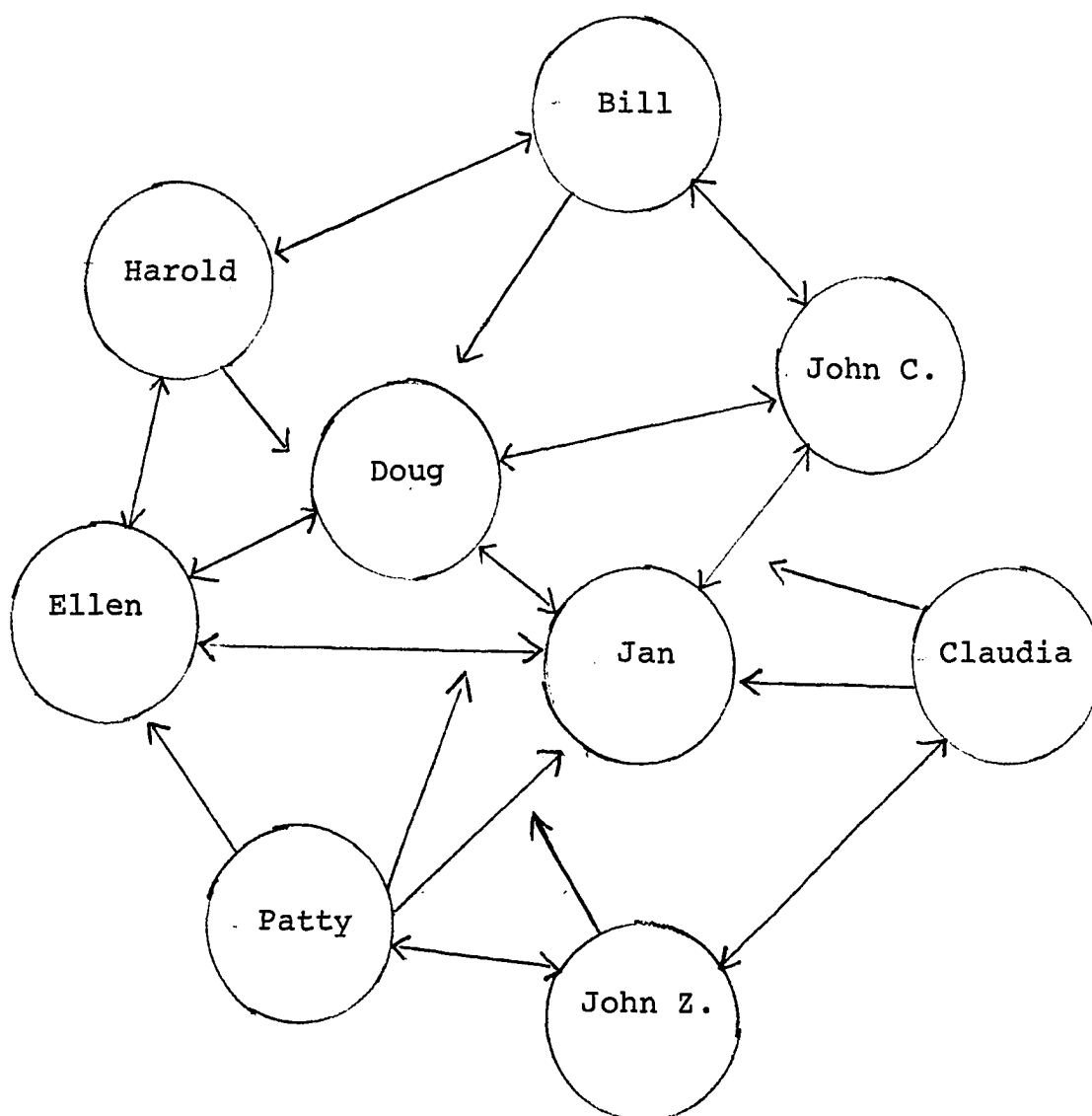
Patty: I don't know if it will help interact, but it has helped me see other, and myself better. I can tell people's feelings. I have learned to observe.

Ellen: Now in the "outside world" I'm aware of the dynamics going on in other groups and the reactions of people with each other. I do think that I've become much more sensitive to people and am more open with them too. I bring up points that often surprise them simply because I am frank about what is going on.

Jan: Because my defenses go up so easily I can see when other people's defenses go up and this helps me relate to them. As a result of talking with this group I can empathize with other people and their "like" problems.

Harold: My experience here has helped me to observe more rather than always responding off the top of my head. I have learned that I can get as close to a person as I want to.

The responses on question seven were made into a sociogram that gives us some insight into the structure of this particular group.



1. Evaluation. First, I think it is significant that everyone received mutual choices, that is, they recognized each other sharing a friendship. They all agreed that everyone was fairly well accepted in the group. However, the sociogram indicates that there was a clique or cleavage in the group. Three persons were

not chosen once by the other six persons. However, the other six people knew each other fairly well before the group experience, while the other three were not known as well. I observed that these three persons were accepted very well by the group. In fact throughout the T-Group experience the other six made very strong attempts to include these persons and to draw them out. I believe they were successful in doing this as evidenced by the positive comments that these three persons made about the group experience.

Secondly, it is clear that Doug was the leader as evidenced by the fact that he was chosen as a friend by everyone in the group except one. Doug became the leader after a lengthy power struggle, because of his willingness to talk openly and honestly about himself and others in the group. I feel he was directly responsible for helping draw out Claudia and John, while Bill, John Z., and Ellen helped Patty come out of her shell.

Finally, I think it is significant that no one was a complete isolate, because everyone received at least one mutual choice of friendship. My observation is that four of the fellows in the group would not have been linked so solidly together, if it had not been for this group experience. What was started in the group led to deep sharing and concern outside the group that deepened

their friendships. Bill spoke at length about this on the final post-meeting reaction form.

2. Summary. From the responses that were made on the agree-disagree questionnaire and the comments on the final post-meeting reaction forms as well as the dialogue taken from the tapes, we have seen some of the factors that either block or facilitate intimate communication in a T-Group setting. My wife observed that many times my interventions were ill timed and blocked group movement, while other times it helped. Honest anger, tears, feelings of group trust, attentive listening, honest observation of each other's behavior, silence, confession of faults, and realization of shared problems were all indicated as factors that helped facilitate intimate communication.

Some of the factors that were either listed or commented on that blocked intimate communication was fear of self-exposure, judgmental observation of another person's behavior, silences that were too long, unwillingness to listen, escape into intellectualizing, talk about safe subjects outside the group, talk about self, subtle remarks of hostility, leadership struggle, communication of insincere sentiments, ignoring pleas for help, and inappropriate interventions by trainer were all indicated

either directly or indirectly as blocks to intimate communication.

However, we have seen by individual testimony, illustrative dialogue from tapes, and results from questionnaires that most of the group got real insights into themselves as well as some new depth in their relationships with one another. However, we have also seen from these same sources that the major block to intimate communication was that most, if not all, of the individuals in the experimental T-Group were deeply involved in their own identity struggles.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

A. Limitations of the Study

Before turning to the general conclusions of this dissertation, I would like to list some of the factors that have limited the scope of the action research done in this study in order to discover the effectiveness of a T-Group in human relationships for helping single young adults resolve the intimacy crisis.

1. The Sample. The sample of nine single young adults that participated in this particular T-Group in human relationships did not represent a very good cross-section of the single young adult population. Only the early years of single young adulthood were represented--eighteen to twenty-three. Also the sample was very homogenous in that they were all still in college; they were all living in or near the parental home in the same suburban community, they were all holding or had held part-time jobs, they all found their primary social outlet together as friends and in the Wesley Fellowship of Fullerton First Methodist Church. Thus, this group does not represent a diverse cross-section of single young adults. Also this sample is unusual in that most of the

participants had already established a fairly close bond of friendship. Consequently, any conclusions or assumptions drawn from this group experience could not have a very wide scope of application to the general population of single young adults.

In order for this study to be more conclusive it would be necessary to set up more than one experimental T-Group. Such groups ought to represent different geographical locations, while the membership of these groups should be drawn from a broader age, cultural and economic range of single young adults. For instance, the problems of intimacy that a single young adult would face living in the city away from the parental home would be somewhat different than the problems faced by the members of this experimental T-Group.

Another limitation of this particular sample of single young adults was the difficulty in determining whether or not the intimacy that the group did experience was the result of experiences in or outside the T-Group. It was evident by their comments that they did get together in groups of two, three and four in between each session to discuss what had happened in the group the previous week. Such variables as this are impossible to assess. Ideally, an experimental T-Group for research purposes should consist of at least twelve members

representing a broader cross-section of single young adults that did not know each other before the experience and did not have a chance to meet socially in between sessions. This way, changes in relationships and depth communication could more easily be measured and attributed to experiences in the T-Group itself.

2. The Observational Methods of Interpreting Experience. In the action research I did on this experimental T-Group, I had no objective means of measuring changes or growth in intimacy. I had to rely upon the interpretation of individual members of the group. Naturally, I have no way of knowing how accurate and reliable these reports were in actual growth. Even the use of taped dialogues to illustrate intimate communication were limited in their accuracy because the choice of examples depended upon my own perceptions of group interaction and certainly my perceptions are not distortion free.

It would have been helpful if I had given the agree-disagree questionnaire twice instead of just at the beginning of the group experience. If I had given these questions again at the end of the group experience, I could have compared the results of the two responses. Any shift in the answers might have been used as evidence to support my hypothesis. However, I failed to do this.

Another limitation was that I did not have any valid means of measuring the long range effects of this group experience upon individual behavior outside the group. I did not find the FIRO-B questionnaire until after the group experience was over. The "affection" section could have been given to the group at the beginning, at the end, and three months later. Then, if I had had a control group that took the same questionnaire in a similar sequence, I could run correlations between the two groups. Any significant changes in a positive direction in the experimental group that was not indicated in the control group could be used as positive evidence that T-Groups in human relationships do help single young adults grow in their capacity to experience mutually intimate relationships. Thus, this study is limited by the fact that most of my supportive evidence for my hypothesis is far too subjective and open to the perceptual distortions of the trainer, observer, and participants. The results are based more on impressions rather than objective data.

3. The Length. The formal sessions totaled fifteen hours in the course of ten weeks. A total of five hours was spent together informally during breakfast. However, I believe that the experience would have been

greatly enhanced by more sessions. The intervening week between each session probably reduced the intensity of the experience and explains partially the difficulty the group had getting started each session. However, the fact that most of the individuals saw each other again in between sessions may have helped deepen ties, but I have no means of assessing that. I feel that my observations of this group were really just a fleeting glimpse of this group's attempt to establish intimate communication due to the short length of time together.

4. Trainer's Experience. Very definitely my lack of experience in using a T-Group for exploring human relationships hampered the fullest development of T-Group dynamics. I found that my best approach was often to remain silent throughout the group session unless they got bogged down. However, it took me nearly five sessions to learn that lesson. Often my interventions focused upon individuals rather than on the interactions going on between persons or group processes. This approach tended to cause many of the group members to become self-analytical. It seemed to me more often than not that my interventions blocked communication rather than facilitating it, especially during the early part of the group life. However, this may have been caused by the

dependency struggle they were going through with me.

5. Failure to Use Learning Techniques. Another factor that limited the experience of this T-Group was that the fullest possibilities of the learning situation provided by the T-Group were not utilized. Had I been a more experienced trainer I would have helped the group work through some of their communication problems by using role playing. Also I feel that the group would have benefited by listening to some of the more heated sessions on the tapes. But several people were so threatened by this suggestion that the group never took advantage of this opportunity for learning. Although I gave the group post-meeting reaction forms to fill out after five of the sessions, the group was never able to utilize the results to help group growth. After the third session they had one of the girls take the post-meeting reaction forms home to compile the results into a report to be presented at the next meeting. When the report was given, the group listened attentively, but didn't attempt to utilize any of the insights about the group. One reason for this may have been the fact that I was not sure myself how to help the group utilize the results and they also had the same problem.

B. General Conclusions

It has been demonstrated in this dissertation that intimacy is the basic developmental task of the single young adults. However, it must be concluded from the study of this particular group of single young adults that the struggle with identity was a major block to developing intimate communication. However, it was plainly evident that when intimate communication did take place there was a complex, dynamic, interchange between two persons that was mutual and that required mutual self-exposure.

From a thorough study of Erik Erikson's life stages of psychosocial development based on his own clinical experience, we have seen that unresolved conflicts from earlier life stages may hinder the single young adult in his capacity to experience true intimacy. In the experimental group it was clear that most of the single young adults were still deeply involved in the adolescent struggle with identity diffusion. However, it was impossible to tell with any accuracy what other factors from earlier life stages were hindering intimate communication.

The very limited results from the action research seem to give some support to the assumption that

intellectual and emotional benefits are derived from a T-Group in human relationships. From the reaction forms it seemed clear that all the respondents liked the experience and they felt it had been of considerable aid to them especially in terms of a new self-awareness that had its side effects in making them more aware and sensitive to others. Thus, we can conclude that this particular group of single young adults found the T-Group experience valid in helping them discover who they were by seeing themselves through the eyes of others in the group. However, I do not have any conclusive evidence to support my hypothesis that a T-Group in human relationships is a valid tool for effectively helping single young adults resolve the intimacy crisis.

Finally, it must be mentioned that through the various data collecting methods I used, I was able to determine some of the processes and factors that either blocked or facilitated intimate communication. As was indicated in the summary of Chapter Five such factors as anger, tears, group trust, listening, silence, confession of faults and realization of shared problems all helped facilitate intimate communication. But at the same time fear of self-exposure, critical observations, extensive silences, unwillingness to listen, escape into intellectualizing, talk about safe subjects, talk about self

hostility, leadership struggle, unstructured group situation, ignoring of pleas for help and poorly timed interventions by trainer were all indicated as blocks to intimate communication.

C. Implications for the Church

Because of the uncommonly honest expression of feelings demonstrated in this T-Group, individuals helped one another to be more realistic and open about themselves and the reaction of others to them. It is through this honest expression that the participants in the T-Group got a glimpse into the interpersonal world that lies beneath human reactions. In the church as well as in other social settings hostile feelings are usually covered over with a veneer called tact and politeness, but in the context of the T-Group such feelings were openly expressed and sometimes resolved. Also feelings that are usually more difficult to express--warmth and affection--were exhibited in the T-Group. Certainly we can see that such experiences might have a profound effect upon the life of individuals in the church. Single young adults as well as other adult laymen could become more sensitive and honest as the result of a T-Group experience. Such persons could greatly enhance the life of other groups in the church of which they might be a part.

I feel that it would be a great help to the small group movement that has started in so many churches, if the church conferences or districts provided T-Group workshops to train interested laymen and ministers to be T-Group trainers. These persons in turn, could return to their local churches as much more sensitive group leaders. Also they could start their own T-Groups in human relationships. Such groups should be started not only for adult laymen in the local church, but also for single young adults that are so often ignored or left to fend for themselves in most local church situations.

In most churches the single young adult fellowship is oriented around social activities and rarely do you find single young adults participating in depth group experiences. Any suggestion for forming a depth face-to-face group is often met by resistance, especially by those single young adults who are afraid of close intimate relationship. Thus, the fear of personal involvement might limit not only the number of single young adults that would be willing to get involved in such a group in the local church, but also the number of adult laymen. Consequently, it may be that small groups such as the T-Group are far too threatening to most single young adults to ever be used successfully in the local church situation. But whatever the case may be, more research

needs to be done with the T-Group in the local church setting not only with single young adults, but also with the total membership of the church.

D. Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Study

There are several possibilities for further study that I would like to suggest. Additional research needs to be done using some valid measuring devices to determine the effects that a T-Group has on the long range relationships of the single young adults who have gone through such an experience.

It also might be valid to make a more intensive study of the different patterns of communication that take place in a T-Group that block or facilitate communication among single young adults. Another worthwhile study might be to explore how various learning techniques such as role playing, or listening to tapes of previous sessions to help achieve deeper communication.

As a result of this dissertation, I believe the following impression can be affirmed. The T-Group appears to be a viable means of helping single young adults explore identity and intimacy problems so that they can grow in their ability to relate intimately with others. The results of this study do indicate that single young

adults grow in their self-awareness and sensitivity to others as the result of a T-Group in human relationships.

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